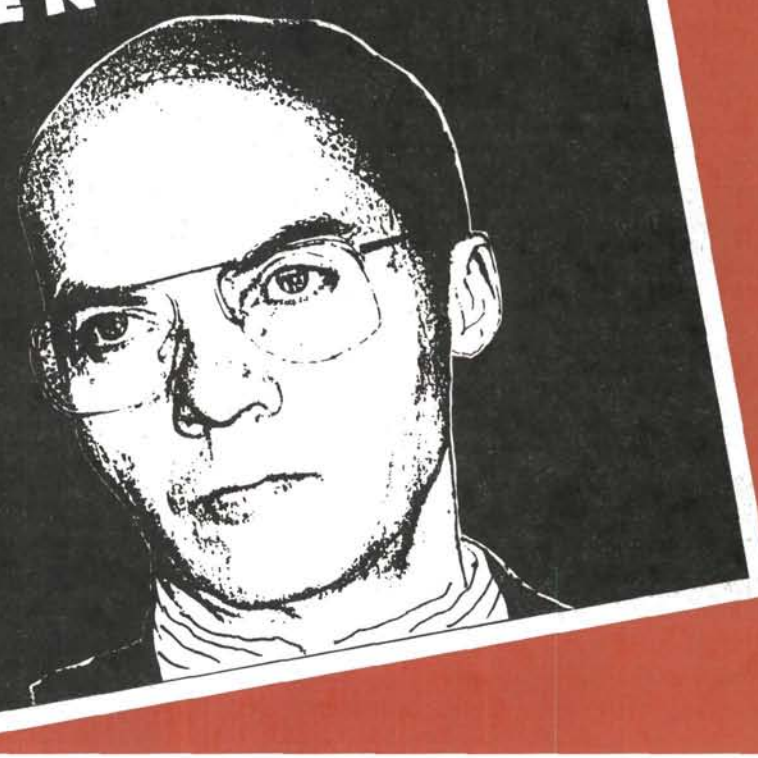
COMMONWEAL

$2.00 October 6, 1995

L'AFFAIRE GAILLOT

PROVOCATEUR OR PROPHET?

STEVEN ENGLUND



St. Charles Seminary Library
Carthagena, Ohio

**********3-DIGIT 458
CW 00079972 9522
ST CHARLES LIBRARY
ST CHARLES SEMINARY
2860 US ROUTE 127
CARTHAGENA OH 45822-9591

R CATHOLIC SCHOOLS Joseph Claude Harris

ES DUFFY on Newt Gingrich

Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft'

ERLY on Rand Richards Cooper & Thom Jones

RD ALLEVA on 'The Brothers McMullen'

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

To the Editors

Like, wow!

When *Commonweal* for September 8 arrived in the mail, I took one look and said "Wow!" My congratulations on the new design.

JEREMIAH P. O'CONNOR
Wollaston, Mass.

Next, we waddle

Like your new look very much! Didn't know how much you needed it till now. (Like the day Chaplin added the moustache.) (And the hat.) (And the stick.)

PETE GREEN
Yonkers, N.Y.

7 pluses, 1 minus

Your invitation to comment on the new format is charming, witty, irresistible. So: Congratulations on your darker print, better line-spacing, the beautiful contents page, the placement of reviewers' IDs with the reviews instead of at the end of the magazine. *And* Joseph D. Policano's essay on Castro's Cuba is quite balanced and lacks the nose-thumbing we so often find in U.S. media references to that sad, courageous land. In that connection, I *didn't* like your cartoon of Castro on the contents page; we've had enough of that kind of thing. Your other cartoons are delicious.

Z.L. BELTH
Hempstead, N.Y.

Readable, worth reading

I do like the new look of the magazine. It is crisp, clean, and easier to read. The contrasts are better.

Today I read the entire issue in one sitting. I especially enjoyed Richard Alleva's movie reviews. He is a wonderful writer. Daniel Callahan's review of Michael Burleigh's book, *Death and Deliverance*, was most probing and provocative. I look forward to reading *Commonweal*.

MADELINE S. COHEN
Mt. Vernon, N.Y

Ragged rights enrage

Two comments on your format changes. Then I will subside.

First, small magazines can't afford the luxury of a whole page of contents that any flipping reader can find for himself, especially when most of the contents are on the cover already.

Second: Technically, ragged right margins make good typographic sense. It has even been shown, I believe, that ragged rights make the columns more readable. I introduced them to one newspaper's Sunday magazine. So I am not hidebound on the subject. From experience, though, I can assure you that all the math, all the logic, all the sweet reason in the world will not convince most readers that they, the readers, actually like ragged right margins. They will nag you and rag you until math, logic, and sweet reason don't seem to be worth the pounding any more.

I subside.

TOM BLACKBURN
Haverhill, Fla.

Justices as legislators

In his July 14 review of Richard Posner's *Overcoming Law* and Robert Nagel's *Judicial Power and American Character*, Daniel J. Morrissey asserts that Posner refutes judges like Robert Bork and Antonin Scalia, who embrace "fallacious theories" holding that judges can avoid making law while interpreting it. Posner, Morrissey says, recognizes that judicial legislation is inevitable and "should be acknowledged as an appropriate instrument to achieve social ends that are responsive to human needs."

Professor Posner's and Dean Morrissey's view shifts the power to determine how society shall be ordered from constitutional conventions, Congress, and state legislatures to the courts, ultimately to at least five of the nine members of the Supreme Court. If only one person were making such decisions, the arrangement would be recognized as a dictatorship.

There is a difference between judicial rewriting of the Constitution, and an effort to read the words of the Constitution in the context of the Constitutional Convention, the ratification process, and the laws then in effect in the thirteen original states. If justices can decide that the Constitution permits whatever they consider to be "responsive to human needs," our fundamental law becomes less meaningful than "The Jabber-wocky"; it means anything and nothing.

We may argue, for example, about the morality, deterrent effect, or justice of the death penalty. The execution of criminals during the lifetime of the Constitution's framers and ratifiers, however, refutes former Justice Blackmun's contention that the death penalty is unconstitutionally cruel and unusual punishment. If citizens today consider the death penalty undesirable, they should elect legislators who will abolish it.

Though Justice Blackmun's compassion extended to those found guilty of capital crimes, not so to children in the womb; he found a (nonexistent) "penumbra" in the Constitution granting a right of privacy that protects the decision to terminate a pregnancy.

So also with Supreme Court decisions on church-state relations; they are inconsistent with each other, with governmental practices, and with the Constitution. The First Amendment's clause forbidding establishment of an official national religion has been held to bar state payment of teachers in religious grade and high schools but to allow government grants to religious colleges and grants to students in religious colleges.

Justices with agendas don't need to

(Continued on page 4)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FOUNDED 1924

COMMONWEAL

October 6, 1995 / Volume CXXII, Number 17

UPFRONT

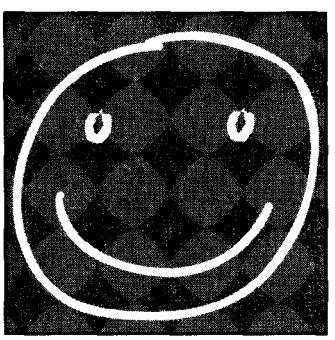
Correspondence 2

Editorial *Do no harm* 5

Et cetera *Caped crusader conquers Gotham Follow the Holy Father as he makes new friends in the New World.* 6

COLUMNISTS

Let a smile be your ontology
Sidney Callahan 7



The final liberation: It's O.K. to be "bouncy," "perky," and even, God help us, "sweet."

Putting on the mind of Christ
John Garvey 8

SHORT TAKES

The poor need lawyers
Edward McGlynn Gaffney, Jr.
"You have the right to remain silent, and without a lawyer, you'd better." 9

Costa Rica
J. S. Fuerst
The social net holds. 10

THE LAST WORD

What goes around...
Francis E. Moore 31

ARTICLES

PROVOCATEUR OR PROPHET?
Steven Englund
Dismissed last January by Rome, French Bishop Jacques Gaillot has become a symbol of Vatican authoritarian excess. But the story, as usual, is more complicated. 12

HOW TO PAY FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
Joseph Claude Harris
They get loads of respect and too few dollars. This is what to do. 19

VERDICTS

SCREEN

Desperado
The Brothers McMullen
Richard Alleva 22

BOOKS

Big as Life *Rand Richards Cooper*
Cold Snap *Thom Jones*
Elizabeth Beverly 24

To Renew America *Newt Gingrich*
James Duffy 26

Independence Day *Richard Ford*
Raymond A. Schroth 27

Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft *Edited by Douglas Johnson and Cynthia Sampson*
James Finn 28

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(Continued from page 2)

examine what an establishment of religion was in 1789 and is today in Great Britain, Norway, and Sweden, among other countries. Divinely inspired and pure of heart, they know that the Constitution means whatever they want it to mean, and that their decisions will "achieve social ends that are responsive to human needs."

JOHN MAHER
Chicago, Ill.

The reviewer replies:

Mr. Maher's letter raises several large issues. He is correct that judicial review—the authority of courts to declare legislation unconstitutional—is ostensibly an undemocratic check on pure majority rule. (Although we have learned from recent confirmation hearings that judicial selection may be just as political as presidential elections.)

But the Constitution itself is premised on certain moral ideals that transcend the transitory preferences of political majorities. And those guiding precepts of our society, like liberty and due process, weren't frozen in 1787. The framers embodied them in a document that they intended to live and grow with our country and to be fitted to the experiences of each succeeding generation.

For over 200 years our society has looked to the justices of the Supreme Court for this "constitutional vision." And it is our particularly American hope that (despite some misturns) their judgments will ultimately be true to our highest ideals and even, perhaps like all human wisdom, "divinely inspired."

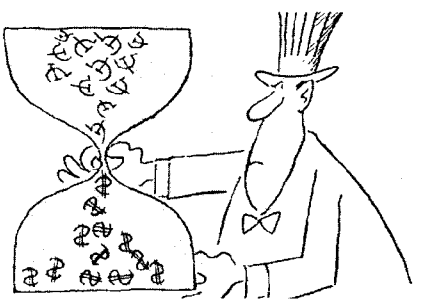
DANIEL J. MORRISSEY

Hanoi's ploy

My initial quick reading of Raymond Schroth's "Hanoi's Victory Undone? Vietnam Embraces the Market" [August 18] was colored by its title. On rereading, I realized that the article's narrative and commentary do not really develop the two issues raised in the headline. But those issues do need to be examined. Specifically:

1. Has Hanoi's victory really been undone? No. That would happen only if Vietnam's financial pipelines from abroad suddenly closed down. Instead, public and private resources are pouring into Vietnam in a steady flow from many "capitalistic" countries, including the United States, as well as from international agencies financed in part by American taxpayers. The result has been to prop up a faltering economy and bolster a discredited regime through which the Communist party still exercises monopoly power over almost every area of Vietnamese life.

Sometimes this grim reality is apparent even to travelers from abroad, as when recently a team of U.S. doc-



tors and scientists, on an official humanitarian visit, found their personal belongings and their scientific materials confiscated by Vietnamese customs officials. A doctor on the team found this treatment "astonishing." It is astonishing only to those ignorant about the regime that still rules Vietnam.

2. Has Vietnam embraced the "market"? One might think so touring the many vegetable stalls and other vendors lining the streets of Vietnam. But in fact the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is dedicated to the "socialist market," and enforces it by rigid discipline, including many still existing forced labor camps. Vietnam's flirtation with "capitalism" lacks at least one basic ingredient that capitalists (and many noncapitalists) hold dear: a respect for private property in law and practice. There is no private property in land, and most of industry is still owned and controlled by the party/state bureaucracy. The rulers are making only a superficial accommodation with the capitalist world, meantime exploiting its resources of all kinds, including the latest technology for security forces, to maintain and revitalize a repressive statist regime.

ROBERT A. SENSER
Reston, Va.

An anti-Nazi bishop

I appreciated Daniel Callahan's thorough review [September 8] of Michael Burleigh's *Death and Deliverance: Euthanasia in Germany 1900–45*, but would like to add a footnote rising out of a visit several years ago to the beautifully restored city of Münster. In its Gothic cathedral rested the tomb, never without candles and fresh flowers, of its wartime bishop, Count Clemens Augustinus von Galen. I was told an interesting story.

As Callahan points out, in 1942, at the height of Nazi power, the German hierarchy and people were aware of Hitler's euthanasia policies. Whether because of his noble lineage or his willingness to be a scapegoat for a notoriously uncourageous hierarchy, Bishop von Galen wrote a pastoral letter denouncing Nazi euthanasia policies and managed to have it read from the pulpits of Münster at all the Masses one Sunday. He was placed under house arrest for the duration of the war. When he saw his cathedral again in 1945, his health was broken.

Pope Pius XII rewarded von Galen with a red hat in the consistory of 1946, but he died soon afterward. Such a man ought to be beatified, or, at least, not passed over in any discussion of euthanasia as government policy. He knew that any step toward its legalization was a step to-

(Continued on page 29)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

STAFF

Editor: **Margaret O'Brien Steinfels**
Managing Editor: **Patrick Jordan**
Associate Editor: **Paul Baumann**
Production Editor: **Jacqueline Dowdell**
Senior Writer: **Robert G. Hoyt**
Business Manager: **Richard Haas**
Poetry: **Rosemary Deen**
Design: **Emil Antonucci**
Screen: **Richard Alleva**
Media: **Frank McConnell**
Columnists: **John Garvey, Abigail McCarthy, David R. Carlin, Jr., Sidney Callahan, Liz Leibold McCloskey**
Staff: **Harriette Balsky, Carmen P. Alava, Sandra Smith**
Advertising Manager: **Ruth E. Taylor**
Publisher: **Edward S. Skillin**

Commonweal, [ISSN 0010-3330] A Review of Public Affairs, Religion, Literature, and the Arts, is published biweekly except Christmas/New Year's; and monthly July and August, by Commonweal Foundation, 15 Dutch St., New York, N.Y., 10038. Telephone: (212) 732-0800. Display advertising correspondence should be sent to Ruth E. Taylor, 11 Graffam Rd., So. Portland, Me. 04106 (207) 799-4387, classified advertising correspondence to 15 Dutch St. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Commonweal, 15 Dutch St. New York, N.Y. 10038.

Commonweal is indexed in Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, Catholic Periodical Index, Index of American Periodical Verse, Book Review Digest and Book Review Index. Microfilm from Vol. 1, 1924, to current issues available through University Microfilm, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and on Microfiche from Bell & Howell, Wooster, Ohio, 44691. *Commonweal* articles also are available at many libraries and research facilities on CD-ROM and in electronic data bases. Serials Data program No.: ISSN 0010-3330. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional offices. Copyright © 1995 Commonweal Foundation. Single Copy, $2. Yearly subscriptions, U.S., $39; Canada, $41; foreign, $44. Special two-year rate: U.S. $67; Canada, $71; foreign, $77. Surcharge for air mail delivery to Europe, North Africa, Central or South America, $35 per year; for other parts of the world, $44 per year. All Canadian and foreign subscriptions must be paid in U.S. dollars by International Money Order or by check on a U.S. bank.

Illustrations: Cover design p. 3, Antonucci; cover art, p. 12, photos courtesy Catholic News Service; p. 3, *Newt!* (Longstreet Press); p. 4, Bas, Rothco; p. 7, Ross, Rothco; pp. 10, 24, 31, Baloo, Rothco; p. 17, Punch, Rothco; p. 22, photo copyright © Twentieth Century Fox; p. 26, Baloo, Rothco.

Do no harm

Last year's obstructionists to health-care reform have become this year's champions. Bill Clinton's failed overhaul, spurred by ballooning expenses, was aimed at expanding both access and coverage for all Americans. Congress didn't buy it because of its complexity. This year's Republican effort has a different goal. To reduce the deficit, GOP leaders propose to trim the projected budget for Medicare—the government insurance plan that covers 37 million senior Americans—by $270 billion over the next seven years. Despite the role reversals and the hemispheric shift in aims, some sort of health-care reform—at least when it comes to Medicare—is now a political possibility. How it is done will be critically important for every American family.

As more and more Americans retire and live longer, the costs of Social Security and Medicare rise. Today, they account for 34 percent of the federal budget, far more than the 19 percent consumed by defense. Republicans are right to put a brake on medical expenditures. The president concurs, but wants to proceed more slowly, cutting $124 billion from Medicare over ten years. Clinton argues this would be less disruptive to seniors and to the medical system, and he's right. The Republicans' self-imposed goal of slaying the deficit in seven years is hasty, unrealistic, and potentially disruptive. And why propose a $245 billion tax cut, primarily for the wealthy, at the same time you are raising Medicare premiums for those on fixed incomes? Furthermore, since even with increased premiums the Republican goal will not be met, hospitals and medical providers will be forced to "pay for" larger savings by slashing their costs. Should they fail to do so, their reimbursement will be cut more deeply the following year to balance the *previous* year's books. It's a fiscal sleight-of-hand likely to threaten health-care services.

Medical reform is a battle with a seven-headed hydra. The complexity of Medicare reform lies in the program's many-layered political history. In the September *Washington Monthly* ("The Medicare Solution"), Ted Marmor writes that today's conundrum arises from earlier compromises deemed necessary to get Medicare out of the starting blocks. By failing to establish a global budget for the program (politicians had to reassure providers this wasn't going to be "socialized" medicine), medical outlays mushroomed across the board. Then, by incorporating the insurance industry as intermediary in the payment process (to reassure that pillar of the economic system), government weakened its capacity to control costs.

Still, Marmor argues, all is not lost. Some government efforts at cost containment have been highly effective. Between 1975 and 1990, Medicare costs rose less rapidly than medical costs in general, because strict government reimbursement programs kept the increase of hospital expenses at a rate of 2 to 3 percent. And according to a study released by the Urban Institute (*Washington Post Weekly*, September 3), Medicare can be a competitive program, its administrative costs ranging from only 2 to 4 percent compared with 8 to 25 percent for private companies. Additionally, with 37 million Americans enrolled in the program, Medicare is two-and-one-half times the size of the next leading insurer. That gives it tremendous leverage. When it leads wisely, other insurers follow.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The elderly deserve affordable, assured medical care. Medicare ought to be a permanent, unassailable component of the social contract in America. That means rooting out fraud and waste, and the Republicans have some good suggestions here. It also means Medicare must live within a strict budget, but not one that will cut off providers and medical institutions at the ankles, crippling the whole system as the Republicans' massive cuts (not only in Medicare but Medicaid) now threaten to do. Change must be gradual, to reassure beneficiaries and providers alike.

Second, Medicare must come to terms with the issue of finite resources. It must examine not only questionable expenditures but end extraordinary, uncalled-for, or wasteful care. Finally, Medicare will have to charge beneficiaries more, but not so much that it will force some out of the system. The Republicans' proposal that more affluent enrollees pay higher premiums (an important step toward means-testing), ought to be championed by Democrats. It is an idea whose time has come. One day, that idea ought to be applied to deficit reduction as well.

ET CETERA

CAPED CRUSADER CONQUERS GOTHAM ■

THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF JOHN PAUL II
OCTOBER 4-8, 1995

Wednesday, October 4, 1995

3:00 P.M. Arrival at Newark International Airport and welcoming ceremony. New Jersey Governor Christy Todd Whitman greets the Holy Father, announcing that she has found a way to lower even his taxes. "And they say the age of miracles is over!" the Holy Father exclaims in Whitman's own country-club argot, one of the seventeen languages he speaks fluently.

3:30 P.M. An address by the Holy Father on why New Jersey's great Catholic "rock 'n' roll artists" Bruce Springsteen and Jon Bon Jovi should return to the church. He warns of "the widespread hedonistic and commercial culture which encourages the systematic exploitation of sexuality."

5:00 P.M. Evening Prayer at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Newark, including an address by the Holy Father on how his prayer to keep the Stanley Cup Champion New Jersey Devils in the Meadowlands was answered, as expected. "Better the devils you know in New Jersey, than the devils you don't know in Tennessee," he says to much laughter.

Thursday, October 5, 1995

9:15 A.M. Private meeting with former *New York Times* columnist Anna Quindlen. The Holy Father reads aloud to Ms. Quindlen from "Thank Heaven for Little Girls," his recent letter on women apologizing for sexism and affirming "real equality" and the "feminine genius." Ms. Quindlen is unimpressed. "I worked for Abe Rosenthal," she explains, "a real pope."

1:00 P.M. Visit to the United Nations, including addresses by the Holy Father to the General Assembly and UN Staff. "As you all know, I loved the population conference in Cairo last year," he says to much laughter. "When I heard about the women's conference in Beijing, I had only one reaction: 'Go ahead,' I confided to Cardinal Ratzinger, 'make my day.'"

5:30 P.M. Tour by popemobile inside Giants Stadium, followed by a wrestling match between the Holy Father and Lawrence Taylor ("L.T."), former All-Pro Giant linebacker turned professional wrestler. "Wojtyla is a lot faster than he looks," Taylor says after the pope pins him. The Holy Father compliments Taylor on the silver cross dangling from his left ear lobe. Taylor insists the Holy Father have the earring.

"Hey," Taylor says, "he has the rest of the outfit."

6:00 P.M. Following the celebration of Mass at Giants Stadium, the Holy Father meets with Notre Dame football coach Lou Holtz to discuss Notre Dame's opening game loss to Northwestern. Characterizing the defeat a "grave ontological error," the Holy Father makes Holtz the bishop of Partenia, a defunct diocese in North Africa. Holtz is never seen or heard from again.

Friday, October 6, 1995

9:00 A.M. Tour by popemobile inside Aqueduct Racetrack, Queens, N.Y. The Holy Father delivers a brief theological defense of bingo and other games of chance.

9:30 A.M. Celebration of Mass at Aqueduct Racetrack, including a homily by the Holy Father on horseback in which he condemns "the widespread hedonistic and commercial culture which encourages the systematic exploitation of sexuality." He tells the crowd to "bet the house on Natural Family Planning in the fifth. It's a sure thing."

5:00 P.M. Tour by popemobile on the grounds of Saint Joseph's Seminary, Yonkers. A search fails to turn up a single seminarian.

5:15 P.M. Popemobile is seen leaving the seminary grounds, the Holy Father sitting in the back mouthing the words, "Maybe Ms. Quindlen was right about ordaining women...Not!"

Saturday, October 7, 1995

9:00 A.M. Tour by popemobile on the Great Lawn of Central Park, New York City. The Holy Father plays softball against a team calling itself "More Catholic than the Pope," whose line-up features Andrew Greeley, Mario Cuomo, Phil Donahue, Garry Wills, Helen Hull Hitchcock, Joseph Fessio, S.J., and Mary Gordon. The Holy Father is knocked down by a pitch just under his chin thrown by Frances Kissling, president of Catholics for a Relatively Inexpensive Choice.

Afterwards, the Holy Father straps on a pair of rollerblades for a quick tour of the park only to be hip-checked into the boat pond by a marauding band of cafeteria Catholics afflicted with a contraceptive mentality. Descending on a white cloud, Mother Angelica smites the troublemakers with a copy of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church.*

9:30 A.M. Celebration of Mass on the Great Lawn, including a homily by the Holy Father condemning "the widespread hedonistic and commercial culture which encourages the systematic exploitation of sexuality."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Way harsh, I know," the Holy Father consoles the crowd fluently in another of the seventeen languages he speaks.

The Mass is followed by a showing of Disney's *Pocahontas*, "a real affirmation of the feminine genius," the Holy Father says.

12:15 P.M. Arrival at the residence of Cardinal John O'Connor. Generalissimo Francisco Franco, Richard Nixon, Senator Joseph McCarthy, Bing Crosby, Pat Buchanan, the Reverend Pat Robertson, Ralph Reed, William Kristol, and Elvis Presley are ushered in the back door, according to Frank Rich of the *New York Times*.

3:30 P.M. Recitation of the rosary in Saint Patrick's Cathedral, and a brief address by the Holy Father on why recitation of the rosary in public schools is not unconstitutional "and takes less time than a moment of silence." Republican strategist William Kristol offers a nuanced interpretation of the Holy Father's statement for the press.

5:00 P.M. In an effort to reach out to "youth," the Holy Father announces the beatification of the late Grateful Dead guitarist Jerry Garcia. "I got the idea from reading Frank McConnell in *Commonweal*," the Holy Father jokes. "Or was it Dennis O'Brien?"

7:00 P.M. Dinner with the bishops of the region at the cardinal's residence. Bishops are bound and gagged "for their own comfort" before entering the residence. Andrew Greeley says grace.

8:30 P.M. Bishops watch *Pocahontas*, and then issue their long-awaited pastoral letter on the "feminine genius" and "the widespread hedonistic and commercial culture, etc."

Sunday, October 8, 1995

8:50 A.M. Departure from La Guardia for the Baltimore-Washington International Airport. The Holy Father's plane is escorted by a squadron of F-16s from the military auxiliary of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Strife, commanded by culture wars ace William "We-don't-have-to-take-it-anymore" Donohue. □

OF SEVERAL MINDS

SIDNEY CALLAHAN

LET A SMILE BE YOUR ONTOLOGY

So sue me

At last, the final liberation. I no longer have to be "emotionally correct." I'm old enough now to reclaim all those unfashionable emotional responses that are frowned upon by the establishment.

Like what for instance? Well, in the circles I frequent you're thought to be stupid if you're too enthusiastic or too happy. *Gravitas* and high seriousness signal "meaningful" intellectual discourse; the lighthearted are assumed to be lightheaded. Gay is fine as a sexual orientation but not as a temperamental style.

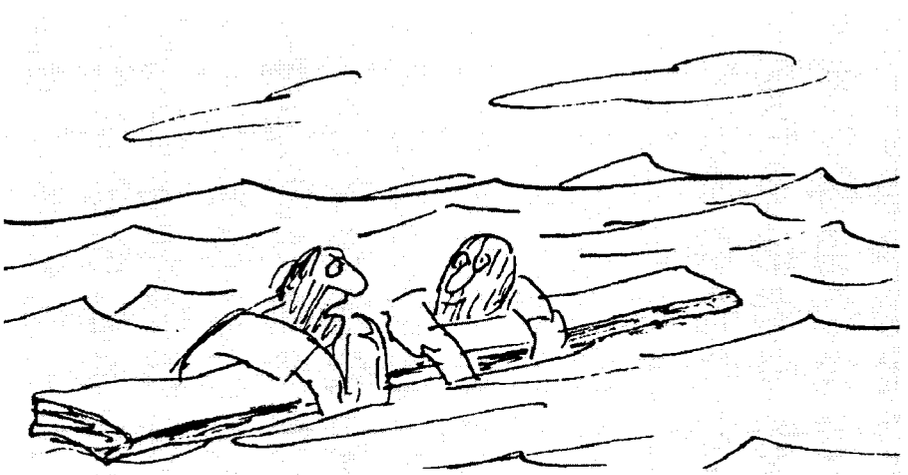
The iron law rules. Pessimism trumps optimism, detached-cool trumps hot, and tough-minded cynicism takes every trick on the table. Eruptions of volcanic rage run amok, à la Camille Paglia, may sometimes be admired, but the deck is definitely stacked against the cheerful.

Soon there will be Pollyanna Anonymous groups mandated for the glad-hearted. "Hi, my name is Sidney and I'm an enthusiastic optimist. I'm addicted to making the best of every situation—powerless to resist the urge to direct my feet to the sunny side of the street."

In Pollyanna deprogramming, I'd also be forced to publicly confess to regular bouts of bubbling chitchat. Indulging in a high-spirited bender again? Sober up. Spreading sunshine is not appropriate behavior among solemn analytic types, nor will it endear you to certain feminists.

Well, so what? Away with these confining emotional corsets. If I'm coming out of the closet and accepting myself as I truly am, I can give up the shadow life of pseudo-*personas*. If I'm naturally "bouncy," "perky," or even, God help me, "sweet," it's O.K. Hell's Bells, I was brought up at Southern cocktail parties, adored June Allyson, and spent a goodly part of my formative years twirling and curtseying through army-navy dos. My kind of womenfolk aim to please; they can soothe any man, woman, or child that strays across their path.

Why must the tenderhearted be considered softheaded? Can the excessively polite people of the world help it if



"It would make me very happy if you would stop whistling!"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

there is a mismatch between cultures? Who has ordained that women, Southerners, and other exuberant *simpatico* tribes must live by the temperamental laws of white Anglo-Yankee males?

In the present system you have to learn to play the game around the conference table. Even I have mastered professional "seriousspeak": Deepen your voice, enunciate loud and clear, turn passionate convictions into tentative hypotheticals. Don't cry, don't laugh. Briskly organize your presentation into three parts, each having three subheadings.

Women who can assume command have learned to sound mighty serious, as well as look the part. (It helps to be tall and/or solid—like Barbara Jordan or Bella Abzug—weightiness from weight, and so on.) I learned these lessons my first week at Bryn Mawr where I'd arrived with flowered taffeta party dresses, purple sweater sets, and bouncing curls. *They*, or those leaders who counted, wore grey wool, sleek straight hairdos, and simple circle pins. Please, no loud colors or clinking jewelry. How I wish I could've known then that African-American Womanists would come to defend the color purple.

Then there were those first encounters with Ivy League philosophical gatherings, where solemn male persons sat around in silence (!), smoking pipes and waiting for the emergence of a topic worth dissecting—at length and in detail. Please, no playful verbal pirouettes or embarrassing personal asides.

Every immigrant eventually learns to decode the rules and conform. In graduate school before crucial encounters with my mentor I used to go into the bathroom, throw cold water on my face, and work at lowering my temperature. Take deep breaths. Remember to slow down and be restrained: appear to be surprised by nothing and mildly interested in everything.

Ah well, good-by to all that. Freedom is just another word for "nothing left to lose." Go ahead, be eager, breathless, and hopeful as you want. Make everyone feel good. Pour oil on troubled waters, charm the birds off the trees. Stop trying to work up fits of indignation if it just isn't you.

If friendly colleagues drop references to hypomanic states, counter with new theories that show that historically manics have served the species well. Retell the story of "The Little Engine that Could": She (obviously a female) pulled that impossible load up the long, long hill by repeating, "I think I can, I think I can." When pressed to the wall by deeply serious pessimists, don't retreat. Be excessively kind and gracious as you inform the grumpy Eeyores and Billy-Goat-Gruff "realists" of your acquaintance (mostly male), that we must let a thousand flowers bloom. There's room for every temperament on God's holy mountain; the glum shall lie down with the glad. As an optimist, I of course believe this good news to be true.

I'm not trying to trample on the tragic view of life. I understand that mildly depressed persons can churn out work and achieve like crazy. And they can obtain holiness. Forget that Baron Von Hügel was so disturbed by Newman's sadness of spirit that he questioned his sanctity. Look at what Newman had to put up with. Even if he did have a supersensitive, touchy temperament, he overcame it.

Well, you get the message. Whatever natural endowments you receive in the genetic throw, and whatever the imprinted style passed on from your kith and kin, you can be appreciated and improved. Once you're conscious of the ups and downs of the emotional weather, different temperaments can coexist. As long as we all don't have to be cool and freeze to death. Surely when the saints go marching in, every beat and pace in the book will be represented, from the stately stride to the dancing two-step. A requiem, however, it's not going to be. □

OF SEVERAL MINDS

JOHN GARVEY

PUTTING ON THE MIND OF CHRIST

It's very scary

A few Sundays ago the Gospel reading in the Orthodox church was Matthew's story of the encounter of the rich young man with Jesus. Jesus tells him that to be saved he must keep the Commandments, including the most difficult one of all, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." When the young man says that he has kept the Commandments, even that hardest one, we have no reason to think he was not telling the absolute truth. Jesus then tells him, "If you would be perfect, sell what you possess, give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." This is followed by the statement that it is hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven, though with God all things are possible.

This passage has often been used to make a distinction between the life of the ordinary Christian and the life of the committed ascetic. After all, the young man can be saved simply by keeping the Commandments; but he has to go farther to become perfect. I think this misses the point, which is a somewhat frightening one.

Saint Athanasius said that God became human so that human beings might become God. This doctrine of deification is central to Orthodoxy, and to the mysticism of the West (for example, in *The Cloud of Unknowing*, the *Letter of Private Direction*, and the writings of Saint John of the Cross). Asceticism is certainly involved here, but it is not seen as a special vocation, and deification is seen as the state to which all are called, a complete restoration of the communion with God which is broken by sin. Jesus revealed what we are to be; though he is divine by nature, we become divine by adoption.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

To be divine, in Christian terms, means that (in Saint Paul's words) we must "have this mind among ourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself...." (Philippians 2: 5–7)

Richness in the form of possessions is in this context a metaphor, and more than a metaphor. To be rich is not only to have more than you need, it is to hold on to that which makes you secure. What happens if you sell everything you have? You have nothing between you and hunger, between you and illness, between you and death. It is entirely natural to fear all of this, and it seems foolhardy to think of abandoning it all, in the hope that God will take care of you.

This idea—that we are called to become divine—means in the context of Christianity that we are to empty ourselves, as Christ did. What is increasingly clear to me is that whether we choose to give it all up or not, it will all be taken from us anyway. When Jesus says "take up your cross" the implication is that the cross will be there whether we take it up or not. We will be crucified in any event. How will we deal with it? When you see people at the edge of death you understand that there is little you can do for them. You can bring them what the church has to bring—the sacraments, Scripture, words of consolation that often seem, in context, pretty hollow—because the dying person knows that you have not been where she is, which is to say the place where you lose everything you have ever known and leave everyone you have loved.

Of course, it is our faith that Jesus' death has overcome death itself, that we do not leave those we have loved, that death does not cancel us. But having that faith, feeling it when confronted with death is, to put it mildly, no easy thing. Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane, said when he was "greatly distressed and troubled," should make it clear that we cannot expect to meet this moment without difficulty.

Riches represent the attempt we make never to come to this moment. In this sense they are both metaphorical and more than metaphorical. They are metaphorical in that they need not be possessions. The person who holds on to any self-image, any sense of personal importance, or is pleased to be a CEO, a bishop, or a well-regarded poet, is holding on to a kind of wealth. And we do in fact use physical possessions in the same way. All of these things distract us from something absolutely unavoidable. I had always thought of the passage about the rich young man as having something to do with Christian ethics, the relationship between rich and poor, and of course this is also present in the passage. But finally it is about a kind of law that obtains in the fallen world. Like "the sins of the fathers are visited on the children," it is not about God's sense of justice; it is simply a fact. In fact the rich try to hold on to something that cannot really be held on to, and if we need to empty ourselves in order to be like the one who assumed our nature so that we could assume his, that grasping will keep us from being able to join him.

The subversive thing about Christianity is that there is no point at which we could really know that we have given it all up. We are left as the disciples were when they asked, "Who then can be saved?" It isn't possible for men, Jesus says, but with God all things are possible. That's the only note of hope here, or for that matter anywhere. □

Edward McGlynn Gaffney, Jr.

THE POOR NEED LAWYERS

A duty of care

An occupational hazard of being a law school dean is that I have to put up with a lot of lawyer jokes. The latest one I heard asks how many lawyers it takes to change a light bulb. Answer: How many lawyers can you afford? Lawyer jokes aside, is any of us so cynical that we are willing to cast aside our society's aspiration to "equal justice under law" (to use the words over the front door of the Supreme Court)? To put flesh on the question, if a landlord who has abused the law is going to evict a poor person improperly, should not that poor person have a champion to protect his or her rights? In short, who of us really wants legal services to be cut off for poor people?

Not long ago there was a renaissance of interest in what historians refer to as "republican virtue." The term refers to the commitment to the commonweal, manifested by our extraordinary leaders in the formative years of the republic. A generous critic of the present 104th Congress might concede that its intentions with respect to the republic are honorable, but the public virtue of the reigning Republicans is coming clearer as its members exercise the power of the purse, putting our money where their mouth is. Last July, for example, Congress held hearings on whether to continue public funding for the Legal Services Corporation, the federal agency that provides attorneys for poor people in civil cases. Congressman Henry Hyde (R-Ill.), who chairs the House Judiciary Committee, pledged to support a bill to dissolve the agency and end funding in two years. On the day after the House voted to cut LSC funding by nearly 35 percent, Hyde suggested that economics, not politics, drove the decision. "In an ideal world," Hyde said, "Legal Services could, and should, continue getting federal funds. But, unfortunately, we are confronted with a mind-boggling task of cutting spending to move toward a balanced budget." Or, in the words of Don Corleone, "Nothing personal, just business."

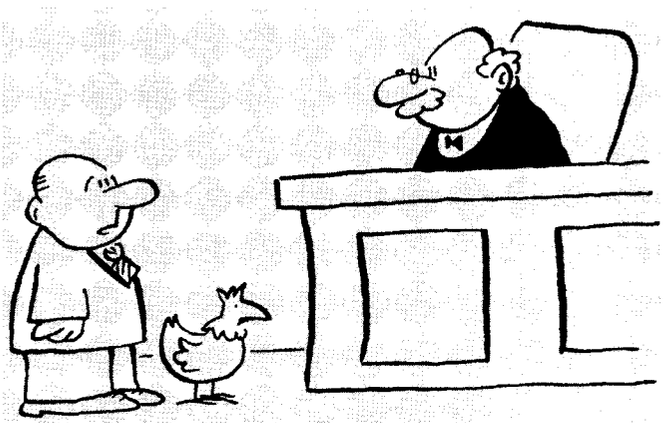
The Senate should not accept this portion of the contract on America. And if the Congress agrees to kill LSC, the pres-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ident should veto the legislation. For the business of cutting federal funds to LSC is a matter of public justice. When we negate the public commitment of the past thirty years to provide access to the justice system for the poor, it goes to the core of our self-understanding as a community.

The principles that were urged in favor of government funding for lawyers for poor people back in the 1960s need rearticulation and clarification, lest they be cast aside with the dismissive words of Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.): "You just don't get it." No matter how the debate over funding for the National Endowment for the Arts turns out, the terms of the debate over funding for LSC are different. One cannot avoid public or societal responsibility for the fair operation of the court system, which has always been considered a central function of the government. Since no one is seriously proposing the privatization of the judiciary, it follows that access to the machinery of justice should be available to all, not just to those who are wealthy enough to buy it. The rich and powerful have enough advantages as it is, without giving them monopoly control over the justice system.

In fairness to the leadership in this Congress, though, they have a point in looking to the states and to the private sector to do a lot of the things we used to think the federal government should do. Anyone familiar with the principle of subsidiarity should not insist that the highest level of government alone be responsible for providing some sort of level playing field in the justice system. But the federal government has never borne that responsibility exclusively. For decades, lawyers have given generously of their time to provide free legal services, and all lawyers should renew their own commitment to republican virtue on this score. The license that lawyers receive to practice law entails a high moral obligation to provide the full benefit of services to those who cannot afford to pay a fee. Several law schools (including Tulane, Penn, Valparaiso, and Loyola of Los Angeles) now require their students to engage in *pro bono* advocacy as part of their formation as lawyers. All of these schools, moreover, offer financial assistance to their alumni and alumnae who are willing to spend some period of their life assisting poor people.



"I'm not complaining, your honor, but isn't it customary for a court-appointed attorney to be a human being?"

These actions and other programs of the organized bar are all desirable and appropriate. But private-sector voluntarism does not absolve the larger political community of our social obligation to the poor. To use a technical term from tort law, we all have a duty of care. Neither members of the legal profession nor members of Congress should abandon the poor. □

Edward McGlynn Gaffney, Jr., *is the dean of the Valparaiso University School of Law.*

J. S. Fuerst

COSTA RICA

Where the market is not the master

A recent month-long trip confirmed my view that Costa Rica is a model Central American country. Its 3.5 million people have one of the highest per capita incomes among third-world countries—an economic benefit that flows largely from the abolition of Costa Rica's military force in 1948. Life expectancy exceeds that of the United States and is far higher than Costa Rica's near neighbors. Its literacy rate is also among the highest in the region.

It is Costa Rica's efficient, educated, healthy labor force, rather than low wages, that President José Maria Figueres emphasizes in attempting to draw more U.S. investment. Though the current unemployment rate is about 4 percent, between 20 and 25 percent of Costa Rican families live in poverty, with annual incomes under $5,000. The high poverty rate comes from considerable underemployment and a large immigration from neighboring Nicaragua. Despite the end of the war between *contras* and Sandinistas, Nicaraguans continue to stream to the relatively more bountiful Costa Rica. They now number 475,000 people or 14 percent of the population.

Nevertheless, walking the streets of Costa Rica, one sees few beggars. One sign of general prosperity in San José is the multitude of auto dealerships that seem to outnumber the ubiquitous shoe stores of other third-world capitals. In a modest middle-class development where we stayed on the outskirts of San José, virtually all of the seventy-five families had cars, telephones, and TV sets. In 1993, the economy grew by more than 6.5 percent and exports climbed 17 percent.

This performance has not sparked much interest in the United States. Following the demise of the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, U.S. news coverage fell dramatically. For three years, including the first twenty-one months of the Clinton administration, the United States did not even appoint an ambassador. In contrast, Costa Rica's salutary con-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ditions have not been overlooked by Costa Ricans themselves and investors from Europe and Japan, who recognize its promise as a tourist haven. Hotels, condos, and shopping malls are going up. Costa Ricans, recognizing the import of their parks and plant and animal life, are becoming the most environmentally conscious people in Latin America. Hospitality and honesty are widely practiced—even toward Americans!

In a world where welfare statism is considered passé, Costa Rica holds to its democratic-socialist policies and strong social safety net. Virtually all the officials with whom I spoke declined to see privatization as a panacea for the problems of economic development. Roderigo Carreras, vice-minister of foreign affairs, remarked in an interview that "even Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary are not finding untrammeled privatization to their liking....People who have had many years of a safety net, do not easily give it up." Guido Alberto Monge, vice-minister of housing, said that "the market is only the servant of government. It cannot be our master." He told me about a group of visiting Chilean officials and economists who had "debunked the myth that free-market policies were a panacea for Chile, and pointed out that such policies did not work without considerable government intervention and assistance."

The previous conservative administration of Rafael Calderon had attempted to sell many state-owned enterprises, and dealt summarily with Costa Rica's traditional cooperatives. But President Figueres's governing party, which won the 1994 election by less than 2 percent of the vote, continues to debate the issue. In an interview, he told me that he was not dogmatic about privatization. If private ownership in a particular industry were more efficient than government ownership, say in sugar production, he would be in favor of it. But in his opinion, the government should make these enterprises so efficient that the public would derive greater benefit from them as nonprofit services than from privatization. Health-care programs, which are among the most efficient in Latin America, could be improved, Figueres believes, by allowing patients a freer choice in physicians, while the government continues to provide coverage. At the same time, the government is shifting some insurance operations to the cooperatives which are able to broker their own coverage.

Education is another area where privatization is of concern. Demilitarization has allowed Costa Rica to devote a very large share of its budget to schooling. There is universal education through the primary grades, and the educational attainment of Costa Rican children is the best in Central America. But 20 percent of Costa Rican children go to private schools and a very large proportion of these go on to university education. In order to reduce the differences between public and private schools, President Figueres has introduced measure to teach English as a second language; to bring computers to the classroom; and to raise teachers' salaries.

Though Figueres has worked in the private sector, he is well disposed toward the cooperatives, which play a larger role in the Costa Rican economy than in any other Central American country. They provide 85 percent of the nation's milk, 45 percent of its meat, and 40 percent of its coffee production. When United Fruit abandoned its banana plantation recently, the cooperatives took it over and are continuing production with moderate success. The cooperatives also play an important role in running credit unions. Their own bank supports housing ventures. In fact, cooperatives now account for 10 percent of all housing construction, and by the end of the Figueres administration, they are expected to produce 35 to 40 percent of new housing. Rudolfo Navas Alvarado, the president of Unacoop, says the cooperative program enables workers to play a significant part in the management of their enterprise and provides "profit-seeking" motivation which state operations lack.

One of the significant ways that Costa Rica seems to be raising itself out of third-world status is in its approach to taxes. Costa Ricans rarely exclaim, as some Americans do, "I'm entitled to this, I'm a taxpayer." They don't think of themselves as such, and with good reason. Only 50 percent of the tax liability is collected. Many small businessmen, professionals, and skilled workers with second jobs do not pay taxes, which are collected primarily from salaried workers. Hence, there is a proposal to raise the sales tax from 10 to 15 percent. There is considerable opposition, with many arguing for more efficient enforcement of the income tax. Criminalization of income tax evasion seems to be in the works.

Another sign of the maturation of Costa Rica is its approach to the decentralization of power. Ten years ago, President Oscar Arias announced that decisions made in San José would be better made on a regional basis. The current administration agrees. Recently, the governing party decided its candidates will be nominated on a regional basis, bringing assembly candidates closer to the control of local people. A similar sort of decentralization is being attempted in the school system.

Perhaps the clearest evidence of the growing strength of Costa Rica is the fact that so few Costa Ricans apply to come to the United States, except for study or visits. The brain drain so common in other Latin American countries is not apparent here. All of this might indicate that the country is rising out of its third-world status. But that would be misleading. Costa Rica's mountainous debt (its debt service is 8 percent of GNP) continues to put it at the mercy of the World Bank and the IMF. The most important element in raising Latin America out of poverty is restructuring the debt owed to the developed countries. Almost equally important is access to the U.S. market. Sixty-five percent of Costa Rican imports come from the United States, but only 1 percent of U.S. imports come from all of Central America. While NAFTA may be a step in the right direction, President Figueres believes that an expansion of the Caribbean Basin Initiative may be even more productive for the region. □

J. S. Fuerst *has taught for many years in the social work department of Loyola University, Chicago.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PROVOCATEUR OR PROPHET?

The French church & Bishop Gaillot

Steven Englund

Gallus Gallo Lupus. The French are wolves to each other. Yet the fraternal conflict engendered by the Vatican's dismissal of Bishop Jacques Gaillot of Evreux is extreme—even for France. Men and women who believe in a God of love and who strive to love their enemies treat fellow Catholics who differ in their estimate of Père Jacques as if they were schismatics or Protestants. Unsubstantiated allegations of homosexuality, of racism and anti-Semitism, of psychosis and neurosis are thrown around by responsible and highly placed people. The Gaillot affair has dealt a body blow to the ancient *église de France*, ripping old scars wide open. Cardinal Pierre Eyt, archbishop of Bordeaux—a prelate who has Rome's ear—doubts that the Vatican appreciates just how torn apart his countrymen are. It is a sign of the times that when asked what sort of epitaph he would like to see affixed to his episcopate one day, the cardinal replies, "a traditional moderate who tried to hold onto the old Catholic liberal wing because he knew they were sincere."

The Gaillot affair has provoked more than a few reactions in the United States. Despite considerable attention in the *New York Times* and the *National Catholic Reporter*, the story has yet to receive dispassionate consideration. I spent six weeks in France this past summer trying to sort through the issues. I would be lying if I claimed that I arrived in Paris without a point of view. Subsequent researches and interviews (on and off the record), with more than twenty-five people, including most of the large cast of this French melodrama, as well as with a number of leading prelates, taught me a lesson I never seem to learn well enough: Things are not always what they seem. It is tendentious and wrongheaded to hurl abuse at the Vatican for acting (or reacting) as it did, but it is equally true that the bishop of Evreux has a great deal to be said for himself and his views. In the end, a reasonable person can understand both sides quite clearly, even sympathize with them. One's final judgment on the matter will be largely a product of what one thinks a bishop should be.

Jacques Gaillot was appointed to the see of Evreux in May 1982, at forty-six, the youngest ordinary in France. A year later he made news by supporting a conscientious objector who refused alternative service. Soon after, Gaillot was one of two (out of 110) French bishops to vote against the episcopal conference's statement on nuclear arms (approving the policy of nuclear deterrence). June 1984 saw one of the largest postwar mobilizations of French Catholicism—on behalf of parochial schools. Gaillot again took a contrary stance.

The first extended attention paid to Gaillot by the media came in January 1985 when he signed an appeal on behalf of underpaid Catholic school teachers. Among his co-signatories was Georges Marchais, head of the Communist party. "A tool of the church's worst enemies" was among the epithets flung at Gaillot by conservatives within his own diocese. The right-wing *Le Figaro* conducted a campaign against him. Gaillot calmly defended himself, noting, "while the church often appears allied with the Right, the gospel is not neutral"—implying that the gospel was not only not conservative, it was left-wing.

At the annual conclave of the French bishops in Lourdes the following October, Gaillot told the press he felt the bishops "remain too preoccupied by the correct functioning of the church and its structures." Instead they should be speaking out more strongly against apartheid or nuclear testing. Early in 1987, Gaillot called for voting rights for immigrants while decrying the quasi-racist political party, the National Front. Criticized for not providing clear explanations for his actions, he replied: "The role of the bishop is not to find solutions but to raise cries....His first job is to witness, not to explain....We have to break this myth of unanimity of the bishops." Gaillot also traveled to Athens to show solidarity

STEVEN ENGLUND *is a free-lance writer who specializes in French history and culture. He lives in Waupaca, Wisconsin.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with a boatload of Palestinian refugees (he had already publicly embraced Yasir Arafat), to South Africa where he appeared with a group of Communist militants, and to New York City where he spoke out for disarmament at the UN. He also attended a black-tie affair of the Free Masons, famous throughout France (and French history) for their anticlericalism.

During the 1988 episcopal assembly, Gaillot not only broke the secrecy of the conclave by leaking information to the press, but he spoke out for married priests and the use of condoms to combat AIDS. *Le Monde*'s religion reporter, Henri Tincq, comparing Gaillot to "either a sniper or a prophet," wrote that the bishop "has the merit of saying out loud what many people in authority in the church think down deep." A month later, Gaillot blessed a union between two homosexuals.

1989 brought the first of many public invitations from Gaillot's French episcopal brothers to shut up. The president of the bishops' conference, Cardinal Albert Decourtray of Lyon, wrote "Cher Jacques" a confidential letter in which he confessed his "stupefaction" at seeing Gaillot break the secrecy of the bishops' meeting while taking public positions opposing the magisterium. Decourtray summed up: "Your situation is serious....With all the friendship you know I have for you, I ask you, if not to retract, then at least to cease making declarations opposed to the teachings and doctrine of the Catholic church."

A few days later, at episcopal intervention, Gaillot was disinvited at the last minute from an appearance he was to make on the French Catholic "minitel," an on-line, question-and-response hour. He called it "a serious attack on my freedom of expression." Following an interview he gave to *Lui* (a French version of *Playboy*), Gaillot was chastised by the vice-president of the French episcopal conference. The bishops voted again to censure him. Gaillot offered his resignation if the pope wished it. He also gave an interview to the leading French gay magazine, while in another venue he pleaded the incompetence of the Catholic hierarchy to judge the homosexual condition.

Then, on February 15, 1989, Gaillot surprised everybody by publicly submitting. Saying "there is no mission without communion," he signed an agreement with Cardinal Decourtray in which he promised "loyalty" and even "docility" toward the pope and the teachings of the church. Hardly a week later, however, Gaillot dissociated himself from the French bishops' disapproval of Salman Rushdie for his antireligious remarks in *Satanic Verses*. Soon after, appearing on a TV program approximating "Meet the Press," Gaillot renewed his critiques of the "feeble state of internal debate in the church," lamenting that "the great missionary breath born at Vatican II has in part disappeared."

A month later, the Vatican's nuncio in France conveyed to Gaillot news of the pope's refusal to receive him. Meanwhile, the bishop of Papeete in French Polynesia publicly complained of Gaillot's appearance in his diocese (to condemn nuclear tests) without first informing him. On December 12, 1989, while all other bishops boycotted a civil ceremony at the Pantheon honoring a revolutionary bishop who, in 1792, accepted a position in the constitutional church that had broken with Rome, Gaillot put in an appearance, noting, "Once again the church has missed a chance to reconcile herself with the Nation and the Republic." In late October 1991, Gaillot wrote a piece in *Le Monde* demanding the French bishops and Rome change sides in Haiti and support Jean-Bertrand Aristide. This, and more, led the bishops' conference to censure their colleague again.

In midspring 1994, Gaillot was formally admonished by the new president of the bishops' conference, Archbishop Joseph Duval of Rouen: "It is not impossible that Rome will ask you to resign or will install an apostolic administrator with full powers [in your diocese]." The purpose of Duval's warning was to try to protect Gaillot from a Roman reprisal. Gaillot now changed his mind about offering his resignation. "I'm not seeking to hang on, "he said, "but the time to jump ship isn't when it's pitching and tossing." He later changed his mind again and threatened to resign if he were not allowed his freedom of expression. Still later he refused to resign. Henri Tincq has compared Gaillot's situation to the case of Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen in the United States. But the circumstances and the outcome proved to be very different.

The climax took place this past January. "Monsignor for Others," "Monsignor Arafat," "the Red Bishop," "Monsignor Narcissus," "the Agnostic's Herald," and "*l'enfant terrible*" was summoned to Rome to meet with Cardinal Bernardin Gantin, head of the Congregation of Bishops. Gantin had warned Gaillot, on three occasions, about dividing his flock and isolating himself from his brother bishops. The pope himself had once waved an admonitory finger at the bishop of Evreux, telling him it wasn't enough "to sing outside the chorus, you also have to sing in the choir." Meeting with Gantin on January 13, Gaillot was offered the choice of resigning his see, in which case he would receive the title of bishop emeritus of Evreux, or being fired, in which case he would simply be the ex-bishop of Evreux. In the latter event, he would retain the rank of bishop with a title *in partibus*. Gaillot left the meeting, but instead of getting back to Gantin that evening with his decision, went immediately to Paris where he gave a statement to *Agence France Presse* saying "the blade has fallen."

The reaction to Gaillot's removal proved considerably more explosive and far-reaching than anyone, certainly Rome, had anticipated. Monsignor Jean-Michel Di Falco, official spokesmen for the hierarchy, Cardinal Coffy of Marseille, and Archbishop Duval were "visibly troubled" and surprised by Gantin's action. In his official statement, Duval said "I pleaded for patience in Rome." A fortnight later, he "regretted" Rome's authoritarianism. But in contrast to the Hunthausen affair, no French bish-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

op publicly sided with Gaillot against Rome.

The French media spoke of little else. Gaillot's "transfer" mobilized opinion far beyond the limits of practicing Catholics (10 percent of France's nominally Catholic population). Demonstrations took place all over the country; fallout was registered in Belgium, Holland, Germany, and Switzerland. Politicians and public figures of all hues spoke out condemning Rome.

But it was within the church that the major reaction took place. In Henri Tincq's words, "the very heart of French conciliar Catholicism" saw itself attacked and rose up. "The Vatican Blunders in Evreux" read a *Le Monde* headline, under which ran a story by the paper's noted Vatican II correspondent, Henri Fesquet, who came out of retirement to blast Rome. Forty thousand letters were received within a fortnight at Evreux, while petitions and postcards signed by scores of thousands were sent to Rome. Polls indicated that 73 percent of those questioned felt Gaillot's ouster was uncalled for. His final Mass in the cathedral at Evreux (January 22) brought out several thousand of the faithful in a pouring rain, led by the Communist mayor. Demonstrations across France often included the most active laity in parish work. Catholic media spoke with unheard-of vehemence against Rome. The official spokesman, Monsignor Di Falco, declared these reactions "very unnerving."

In contrast to the Archbishop Hunthausen affair, no French bishop publicly sided with Gaillot.

The Case against Gaillot

Gaillot himself attributes his dismissal to lobbying in Rome by the far right wing of the French church, especially the reintegrated followers of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre whom Gaillot feels (not without reason) the Vatican and the French bishops are cosseting. He also darkly alludes to the influence in Rome of former French Interior Minister Charles Pasqua, whom Gaillot attacked in a book on the immigrant problem. Yet neither of these proved as decisive as the limited but sharp, articulate anti-Gaillot opinion which has been heard since the early eighties from conservatives, moderates, and liberals alike.

The most common complaint voiced against Gaillot was his abuse of the media. He is said to speak out too often too unthinkingly. It is true he has an opinion for all occasions with which he is cheerfully ready to identify the gospel. His positions have included, *inter alia*, criticism of the Rota for annulling Princess Caroline of Monaco's first marriage, disapproval of the U.S. for going to war in the Persian Gulf, and imprecations against the Treaty of Maastricht for being unfair to the poor. In passing, Gaillot compared Rome's governance of the church to Stalin's rule in the USSR, Cardinal Gantin's methods to those of the Stasi, the East German political police, and called Archbishop Duval an "ayatollah" seeking to impose "ideological uniformity" on the French bishops.

Gaillot waffles about his handling of the media. He insists bishops need to spend more time in front of TV cameras, yet he "confess[es] my media sins....[I don't think] I always manage to extricate myself intact from this jungle of images and sounds....I worry about the accumulation of misunderstandings and contradictions that my interventions in the media give rise to. I try hard not to [speak out so much] but I succumb. How many times have I promised to be discreet? But sadly I fall back." He'll pause and say with disarming candor, "I know one day the media will drop me." He stresses that "of course" it is much more important to say Mass than to give an interview. Yet even admirers can point to instances where Gaillot has done the opposite. Charles Bonnet, head of the Sulpicians in France and no supporter of Rome in this set-to, wags his head in perplexity at Gaillot's canceling—at the last moment—a scheduled Mass with the seminarians of Paris in favor of an impromptu press conference. A journalist, Pierre Georges, considers Gaillot's apologies "the false contrition of an insatiable bulimic."

Then, too, Gaillot seems incapable of challenging his interlocutors, even in the face of gross anticlericalism. His personality and appearance do not serve him well in this regard. A short, slight, balding fellow with an imperturbable adolescent smile, friendly blue eyes, and a sweet reedy voice, Gaillot offers the impression of constantly being a bit astonished to be there. He speaks in choir-boy accents of God's reconciling love for the poor, of his own recent book, and then he may make one or two general points about the topic at hand, but beyond that offers no "thought" or sustained reflections. Never does he raise or answer hard questions. Rather, one senses that if Gaillot rather than Jesus had met the adulterous woman, he would speak to her of God's forgiveness while failing to tell her to go and sin no more. In our pluralistic and ambiguous world, such a posture may be seen not as compassion but as complicity and complaisance.

Gaillot's character clearly gives rise to doubts. "In all that I do, I have the need for transparency," he will say. But the statement rings hollow even to some of his close collaborators who tell disturbing stories of his hypocrisy, manipulation, and false naiveté—not to mention his stubborn imperviousness to advice or correction. His vacillation about resigning as ordinary seems in retrospect to have been determined not so much by principle, or the welfare of his diocese, as by which choice would most annoy the Vatican or the French bishops. Then there was the strange matter of the Decourtray accord. Many among Gaillot's supporters took the bishop's signature to be disingenuous. He himself cannot explain why he signed, since he never intended to live up to the collegiality, not to say, the docility that the accord entailed.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Perhaps the most disturbing character issue concerns Gaillot's treatment of the man who was his vicar-general, Père Jean-François Berjonneau. In 1991, Cardinal Gantin requested that Berjonneau write a secret report on his bishop's governance of the Evreux diocese. The priest agreed to do so because he thought he would take the heat off Gaillot by submitting a laudatory statement, which he did. Several years went by before Gaillot found out about the report. Though Gaillot well knew the report was friendly, he did not resist the temptation to use it to attack Gantin, informing the press in a misleading way on what Berjonneau had done. This led to headlines on the order of "Gaillot Sold out by His Vicar-General." Much of the liberal Catholic and left-wing media in France violently attacked Berjonneau, who was left to twist in the wind, all because Gaillot did not make the facts plain. A humble man, devoted to his bishop, Berjonneau did not defend himself. Gradually the press discovered the true situation but too late to rehabilitate the priest. By then the former vicar-general had fallen seriously ill with meningitis; Gaillot never visited him in the hospital.

But the gravest charge against Gaillot is undoubtedly his alleged break from "communion." This includes his defections from Vatican positions on the issues of the day—contraception, married clergy, etc. Gaillot's supporters insist that he is only speaking out in ways that Catholics of his own diocese already do. A diocesan synod of Evreux, for example, called for admitting divorced and remarried Catholics to the Eucharist and for ordaining married men. Gaillot says, "I only say out loud what many other [bishops] keep to themselves. I speak it plainly while the others use such a refined style that they end up not seeming to affirm what they have in fact said." The communiqué from Rome announcing his transfer said, "Unfortunately, the bishop has not shown himself able to exercise the ministry of unity that is the bishop's first duty."

Gaillot admits, "for a long time now I've been a rebel." Like the late bishop of Orleans and leader of the liberal wing of the "conciliar" church, Guy Riobé, Gaillot is the black sheep of the Gallic episcopacy. But unlike Riobé, he has never cultivated any support among the fairly large minority of "conciliar" bishops still left in France. This is also a major contrast between Gaillot and Hunthausen. The bishop of Evreux never joined episcopal committees, never networked or even bothered to be in touch with his colleagues, and never asked their permission to come into their dioceses to take positions at odds with the Vatican and the French church. He didn't bestir himself to take an active part in the bishops' meetings—thereby setting out his opinions for critical inspection—yet he went after his brother bishops hammer and tong in speeches and press conferences where no confrontation or dialectic threatened. Worse, Gaillot felt free to leak the substance of the bishops' debates, including sometimes sensitive documents, to the press. It got so that the French bishops no longer felt free to speak their minds in front of him or to send documents to him.

A leading French philosopher, Jean-Luc Marion, points out that in this age of strong national episcopal conferences, Gaillot comports himself like a bishop of the old regime. He goes where he likes when he likes, he's absent from his diocese much of the time, he takes strong positions on topical social and political questions, no matter how far removed from religion. It is "political religion," in Marion's words, and even if the content is a politically correct version of Vatican II, rather than old regime royalism, the end result is the same: the faith ends up being made to play to a range of predictable worker-priest or 1968 ideological themes. Gaillot disclaims any ambition to hold the office of bishop, yet there can be no doubt that episcopal authority not only appeals to him, it explains his great impact. He speaks of "my second birth" on becoming ordinary of Evreux, and one sees why. Until then, as vicar-general or rector, Gaillot's words and actions were as unexceptionable as they were orthodox, giving no augur of future controversies. One may ask why. Surely there were opportunities that a vicar-general might have found, as easily as a bishop might have resisted. It is hard not to conclude that what was missing in the equation is the access to notoriety that can only come in a Catholic culture from the unique office of bishop.

The Case for Gaillot

Gaillot treated his flock to their initial taste of his fix on things in the coda of his first Easter message as ordinary: "Christ died outside the walls as he was born outside the walls. If we are to see the light, the sun, of Easter, we ourselves must go outside the walls." Making it clear he was less concerned with the 10 percent of the faithful who go to Mass than the 90 percent of nonpracticers and nonbelievers, Gaillot strode resolutely *extra muros*: "I'm not here to convince the convinced or take care of the well. I'm here to support the ill and offer a hand to the lost. Does a bishop remain in his cathedral or does he go into the street?...I made my choice." Thus, as between embarking on a planned pilgrimage to Lourdes or grabbing a last-minute plane for South Africa to demonstrate against apartheid, Gaillot never wavered. Small wonder he has visited prisons more often than any other bishop. "A man is always greater than his crime," he says of those he meets behind bars, and he claims to be astonished at people who are astonished at a bishop for doing this. "We all agree the gospel must be proclaimed everywhere to everyone. But when it's a question of compromising yourself and taking a risk to do so, that's another story."

So far not that unusual. Where Gaillot parts company with other "conciliar" prelates in France is when he criticizes the church for not making the downtrodden its own power center: "The church is too linked to a certain level of social wealth," he says. "The poor are tolerated but not permitted to take responsibility or make decisions [because] they

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

don't have the knowledge or the diplomas....Let's gamble more audaciously. Let the poor become conscious of their rights, dignity, and citizenship in the church. Let them appropriate the gospel. They don't need us as their spokesmen."

The result of consistently making statements like this, or publishing books with titles like *The World Cries Out, the Church Murmurs Back*, or logging time visiting prisons and ghettoes, and generally doing battle on behalf of immigrants, gays, people with AIDS, etc., is that no other bishop in France comes close to rivaling Gaillot's reputation for solidarity with the underdog. His brother bishops grouse that Père Gaillot claims to monopolize the cause of the poor; they charge him with dividing his flock or abandoning most of it on behalf of the few lost sheep. To which Gaillot replies with perhaps the most self-revealing statement of all: "Even though a bishop, I feel I'm the lost sheep."

"Even though a bishop, I feel I'm the lost sheep."

Gaillot also assails the church for not tolerating criticism of itself. "I never broke the law of celibacy," he says, "I only questioned it. But that's worse." A supporter told me, "As long as you do it discreetly, breaking church laws is more acceptable than questioning them." Gaillot believes this is the sheerest hypocrisy. With indignation, he notes that Cardinal Gantin "never inquired about the distress of the poor in Haiti. No, he was only concerned about protocol: whether I had informed the Haitian bishops of my visit." This hypocrisy would be avoided, Gaillot believes, if the church stopped "reacting as if she had everything to fear from an interior dialogue about herself with her faithful."

But it is not Gaillot's style and stances that isolate him from his fellow bishops. Henri Tincq has written that the hue and cry raised against Gaillot's transfer was "the revenge of a generation": The generation is those Catholics whose parents flocked to the alphabet soup of "Catholic Action" organizations (JOC, JAC, JEC, etc.) in pre- and postwar France, whose spiritual mentor was the early twentieth-century desert hermit Charles de Foucauld, who can cite snippets of Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech, who came of politico-religious age in May of '68, and who, above all, claim Vatican II as the foundation and origin of their sincere and very passionate Catholicism.

Such men and women have been anything but happy campers for over a decade now, since a converted Jew was appointed archbishop of Paris and launched a very self-conscious and effective backlash against them. Their dream was brilliantly and elegantly summed up by their great historian René Rémond when he wrote in 1973 that "the church, issuing from its long Constantian night"—that is, forgoing any and all ties to this state and to power—"will succeed in dissolving itself into the mass of humankind, henceforth only to live on in the form of small communities of believers freely assembling in their common search of faith."

In the opinion of large sections of France's active Catholic population, Paris's Cardinal Jean Marie Lustiger has succeeded in redefining this dream as a nightmare. At his rough hands, the remaining Catholic Action faithful have felt neglected and impotent. "We count for nothing," one of them, François Marin—a retired priest of the Evreux diocese—said in tears. They have heard themselves blasted for "losing the Catholic soul of France" and for being complicit or complaisant vis-à-vis Marxism. They have watched their catechism (*Living Stones*) scoffed at and thrown out. They have had their faith maligned for not placing enough emphasis on prayer, sacrament, pilgrimage, and hierarchy. Last but not least, they have undergone the nearly unendurable frustration of the prodigal son's older brother: standing by as their greatest nemesis, the integrist followers of Archbishop Lefebvre, stream back into the church to be accorded better treatment than they.

They have, with greater or lesser degrees of reluctance, accepted the spokesmanship, if not exactly the leadership, of Jacques Gaillot. They have been joined by a large number of divorced Catholics, of Catholics who regularly use contraceptives or have had abortions, Catholics who live with lovers or who are homosexual or ex-priests, ex-nuns, or ex-seminarians.

Reflections of an Interested Observer

In France you hear talk comparing Gaillot to the hapless protagonist of the Dreyfus affair, a century ago. It's probably fairer to say the Gaillot matter is in certain ways a reverse of the older one. Then, an innocent officer was thought guilty by most of the population; today, a prelate of questionable views, personality, and deportment is widely seen as a martyr to the faith. "What upsets me is Gaillot's claim to have a monopoly on the gospel." The cardinal archbishop of Marseille's lament is that of most French bishops. To have let this perception persist was a serious public relations failure for both the Vatican and the French bishops. Rome's other great error is lack of due process. While the Vatican did not act with wild disregard in this case—if bishops were indeed regarded as mere "branch managers" by Rome, who can doubt that Gaillot would have been fired long before?—the Congregation for Bishops did, at the climax, upend the French episcopacy with a *fait accompli*. There are roughly 3,000 bishops in the universal church and it is predictable that some of them might be, or become, unfit for episcopal ministry. Yet there is no agreed-upon, uniform, and public process for reviewing such cases.

If Cardinal Gantin had been cannier, if Rome had submitted Gaillot's dossier to a searching public review, not only would the Vatican and the French bishops have fared better in the media, there is reason to think Gaillot might have failed, or at least have had great difficulty passing, the test. An open examination of Gaillot's record would have allowed

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the international public in on legitimate questions about Gaillot's suitability for being an ordinary.

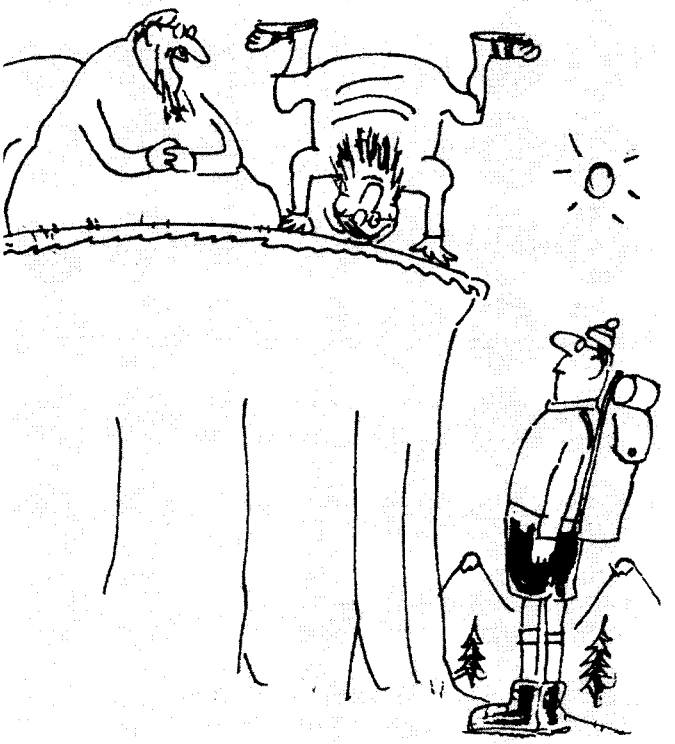
A number of Gaillot's more articulate sympathizers—including dedicated priest-collaborators of the bishop, like Pères Berjonneau and Marin, or leading numeraries of the old Catholic Action, like Père Jean-François Six of the *Mission de France* (the worker-priest movement), or Père Charles Bonnet, of the Sulpicians—quickly elide the issue of Gaillot's personality in order to move directly to the smoking gun, the lack of judicial form. In passing, they readily grant that Gaillot is obstinate, unable to keep his word, to take criticism, or to view himself critically. He is a loner indisposed to working as part of a team.

It is no less disconcerting to find how coy many French media people are about Gaillot. It is easy to understand how the bishops' spokesman, Monsignor Di Falco, could complain of the bad faith of journalists who, off the record, guffaw at Gaillot's shortcomings, yet, in news reports and editorials, rail at the Vatican and the bishops. It is certainly true that a lot of journalists, including several of France's leading religion reporters, will tell you confidentially that Gaillot is manipulative but dupable, a dreamer but a *faux-naif*, a megalomaniac obsessed with his image, unable to answer for himself vis-à-vis the media, and a sincerely religious man who is intellectually underendowed. Writers like Elie Maréchal of *Le Figaro* speak of asides they've had where Gaillot comes off seeming strange, almost paranoid, while at other times he is inappropriately intimate with reporters he barely knows, presumptuously using the *tu* where no other bishop would dream of doing so. Others talk of Gaillot's deep "need" to be in the spotlight, to play the martyr's role, and of his inability to keep a secret.

One emerges from these interviews with characters drawn from all sides with the uneasy sensation that many who have been exposed to Gaillot seem to wonder if the man possesses anything like the inward assurance and control needed to be even an adequate ordinary.

Of course these *ad hominems* are far from constituting conclusive proof of Gaillot's unfitness to wear the episcopal mantle, but taken in conjunction with the charges of absenteeism, broken communion, and an all but hopelessly divided flock, they do indeed constitute reasonable cause to hold such a review. The prelate whom the *National Catholic Reporter* called "a bit of a compassionate maverick" has not sinned against doctrine and dogma nor committed moral turpitude, but it is legitimate to question whether his behavior is appropriate for a diocesan bishop. Père Jacques, who calls himself "more of an awakener than a leader," could turn out, on closer study, to be a dreamer not a prophet, in sense that Jeremiah understood it ("Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let the one who has my word speak my word faithfully" [Jeremiah 23:28]).

Though nearly all French bishops were shocked by Rome's action, they soon returned to fretfully tugging their forelock.



"Conventional or unconventional wisdom?"

The call to convene an extraordinary sitting of the national episcopacy to discuss the fallout from the Gaillot matter was dropped the moment it was known that Rome disapproved. The few prelates, like Cardinal Coffy of Marseille, who aired ambiguous reactions to Gaillot's dismissal have retreated, if not repented, and are now leaning over backward to show "consensus." The respected editor of *Etudes*, Jean-Yves Calvez, S.J., asked recently, "Doesn't the entire church of France too often exist in an atmosphere of timidity and mistrust, a false prudence?" Mightn't her bishops be too "timorous" toward Rome? For his part the equally respected sociologist, Dominique Wolton, can only shake his head in dismay at the paradox which sees the church be bold-unto-reckless when it comes to condemning sexual behavior that "everyone" practices, yet hesitate over disciplining a "flake" like Gaillot. Whence such gingerliness, he asks? What other community—surely not the army or the scientific establishment—would tolerate a maverick tearing it apart from within for a decade-and-a-half?

Wolton answers his own question: The church in France is hobbled by "institutional masochism," the product of decades of accumulated guilt over the church's past misuse of authority. He feels the time for such agonizing is gone; society has a deep need of the transcendent and the church has the tradition and faith to speak to that need. "Gaillot," he says, "is a symptom of the church's incapacity to assume its own history and its own value." And so, Wolton advised the assembled bishops whom he was invited to address at

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lourdes last year: Speak out, "plainly and authoritatively."

The Gaillot affair's immediate effect on episcopal pronouncements hasn't gone in that direction, however. The general reaction among French bishops has been to assert, in the teeth of media interpretations—and, frankly, of common sense—that the Vatican's decision to dismiss Gaillot had "no political character," as an associate of Cardinal Gantin's put it. Archbishop Duval and Cardinal Coffy published a "Message to French Catholics" in the wake of the Gaillot mess, in which they asserted, "The church is not a people as the French people are a people...," rather it is a "sacred" people. One of France's leading moral philosophers, Paul Valadier, S.J., finds such statements smack of latter-day "monophysitism"—they try to spiritualize power questions.

If the French bishops are really searching for a plain, authoritative, and utterly cogent way of "Proposing the Faith to Today's Society" (the title of a report issued on their behalf concerning the Gaillot affair), they could actually do a lot worse than to read Valadier's recent book, *The Church in Process: Catholicism and Modern Society*. While the author is something of a critic of "the new spiritualism," a close reading of his book shows that here, as in most Valadier works, his views are not simple to slot. There are more than a few areas where the Jesuit concurs with Cardinal Lustiger, the prime exponent of papal influence in the French church, that, for example, holiness escapes statistics and the vitality of French Catholicism may be better measured in the witness of its recent martyrs in Latin America than in the latest dismal figures on Mass attendance; a rejection of the "utilitarian argument" for religion ("insisting that Christianity is necessary as social glue will only prepare the ground for atheism when it is found by many that religion isn't necessary"); a critique of Catholic Action for creating an anti-intellectual undertone in the French church; a critique of technocratic illusions and language (for example, abortion euphemized as "interruption of pregnancy"); or the importance of appreciating Judaism's unique role in laying the foundation of Christianity's message of universality and salvation.

The real gravamen of Valadier's book, however, which brings him far closer to Cardinal Lustiger than the latter may realize, is the stern rejection of the thesis— much lionized in France these days—that Christianity, while it greatly contributed to creating modernity, has seen itself exhausted by modernity. Again and again Valadier demonstrates what Lustiger asserts: How contemporary society constitutes more than ever a superb venue for Catholic action, so that "rather than stand at the dusk of religion, it might be nearer the truth to say that Christianity is the dawn of modern religion." Of course, the Catholicism Valadier presupposes is a nondefensive, open-armed, embracing one: "For the Christian faith, there is no healthy return to its sources or its roots unless these are held onto, not for their own sake, but in order to find the dynamism to go into the world." The church, he writes—and he might as well be referring to the Gaillot affair—is traversed by the same questions that rip open society, so therefore she cannot be imperturbable and massively self-assured if she would also be part of the world and helpful to the world. Rather, "she participates in the trials and processes of the world, which is why she is in a position to judge the world. This process is made up of contestations, debates, and contradictions. It is a trial without end." Finally, Valadier's wonderful definition of faith in the late twentieth century, "...it isn't an imperialism, a piece of armor shielding us from all uncertainty nor is it an intellectual sufficiency. It is, rather, a tenacious small bit of light that progressively reveals its force without eliminating the night which it nonetheless illuminates. Such a view [of faith] might regain credibility for it with those people who have been understandably frightened off by [the church's] excessive certitudes, which in fact only cover up so much fear and so many weaknesses."

Valadier's definition of faith: A tenacious small bit of light that progressively reveals its force without eliminating the night which it nonetheless illuminates.

Postscript: Quo Vadis Jacobus?

There is nothing of the Yves Congar or Henri de Lubac about Gaillot. Not for the new bishop of Partenia, a long defunct diocese in North Africa, to work quietly and be silent until further notice. Gaillot moved directly from his residence in Evreux to living with squatters who took over a building in the rue du Dragon, in Paris's 6th arrondissement. There, he added the cause of the homeless to the long list of topics he speaks out on. Recently he traveled to Polynesia to protest the resumption of French nuclear testing. The French bishops voted to continue his salary ($1,000 a month plus living stipend), and they assigned two of their number to stay in contact with him—in the hope of discerning with him "the right" ministry. So far they have seen little of Père Jacques. Meanwhile, the Vatican has proven coy about whether Gaillot's request to meet with the pope will be granted. It appears unlikely. The former bishop of Evreux published, this past spring, a book-length "letter" to his new flock: *Chers Amis de Partenia*. In it, he indicated he had the intention of going to Africa to visit his diocese *in partibus infidelium*. But Monsignor Piroir, the Algerian bishop in whose diocese Partenia falls, has begged the French episcopate not to let Gaillot come. Père Jacques has agreed. In France, you can lose your job shooting off your mouth, but in Algeria these days, you can lose your life. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HOW TO PAY FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Shifting the burden

Joseph Claude Harris

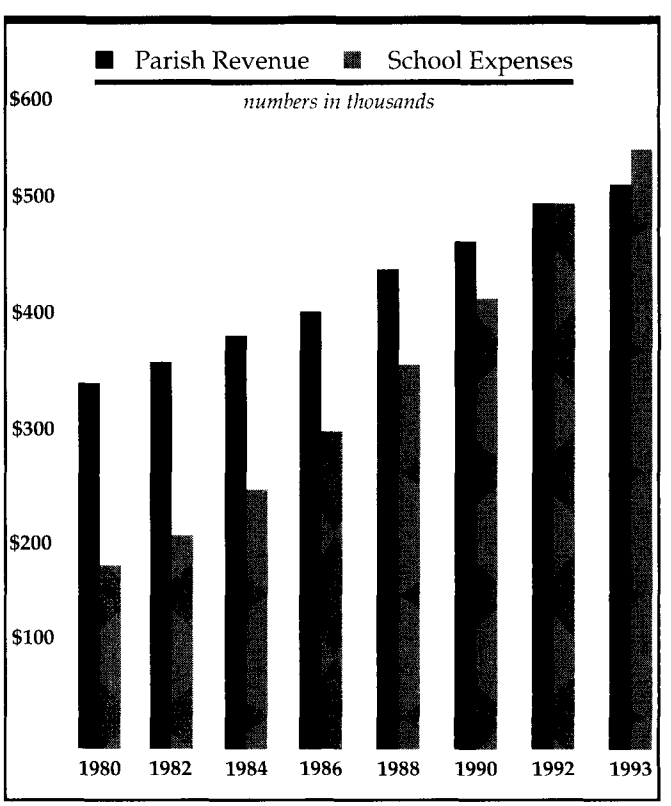
What has been happening to Catholic elementary schools doesn't seem to make sense. Although they are among the nation's most successful and efficient educational institutions, they keep closing their doors. The number of elementary schools dropped from 7,937 in 1983 to 7,114 in 1993. Why is this happening? What business discontinues a successful product line or service?

The gradual decline in the number of Catholic elementary schools in this country arises from a variety of factors. The traditional staffing model—where a cohort of religious sisters taught the sons and daughters of immigrants—is a thing of the past. Today, lay teachers instruct student bodies that include, on average, about 13 percent non-Catholic enrollment. This social evolution may have weakened the rationale for maintaining parish schools. Furthermore, the deterioration of urban centers and the flight of large numbers of Catholics to the safer, more congenial suburbs, caused many Catholic schools to close.

But the most telling reason for school closures is that the traditional economic model—where an individual parish subsidized a single school—no longer works. In 1969, individual parishes paid 63 percent of their elementary schools' bills. Today, they cover only about 33 percent of those costs. But shrinking parish support comes *not* from a lack of generosity on the part of pastors and parish councils. Rather, parish support accounts for less of the school budget because schools now cost more to run than *all* the other parish functions.

If Catholic schools are to continue to operate in this changed environment, a set of new funding approaches must be found. First, however, we need to analyze why Catholic elementary school costs have increased dramatically. In 1980, the average parish elementary school operated with a budget of $184,372. In 1993, the cost to run the same school was $547,838 (*see*, graph). The total cost increase amounted to $363,466. One-third of the increase ($138,950) can be attributed to inflation. But the other two-thirds or $224,516 was the result of growth in expenses.

Another way to look at the situation is to consider that, on average, parishes lack new revenue sufficient to meet the expanded need of school finances. Since 1980, school expenses have grown at an average annual rate of 8.7 percent. During the same period, however, total parish revenue grew at an annual rate of only about 3.1 percent (*see*, graph). Whereas the average parish's fiscal resources did increase by $169,538 between 1980 and 1993, school expenses shot up $363,466. As a result, the parish school subsidy, while it tended to increase as a share of the parish budget, decreased dramatically as a portion of the school budget. Simply put, to have kept pace with the subsidy it was granting its school in 1980, the average parish in 1993 would have had to provide the



Joseph Claude Harris *is a research analyst living in Seattle, Washington.* *His work has been underwritten by a grant from the Lilly Endowment. This article is adapted from a chapter in his forthcoming book,* The Cost of Catholic Parishes and Schools *(Sheed and Ward).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

school with an extra $174,463. To date, no one has adequately addressed this shortfall in the traditional parish-funding model.

Rising prices in excess of inflation normally spell trouble for a business. For example, when health-care costs increase at about three times the rate of inflation, as they have done in the United States in recent years, businesses take money that would have been spent for other purposes and apply it to medical expenses. In the commercial world, this money can only come either from the profit margin or from customers in the form of higher prices. Squeeze the profit margin and the shareholders complain; but raise prices and you risk the loss of sales revenue. Catholic schools face a similar dilemma. While their aim is not to make a profit but to provide a good education, when the cost of doing so keeps going up and the parish subsidy is not able to keep pace, tuition prices are bound to rise. This forces some of those who would like their children to attend such schools to stop "buying the product."

A review of enrollment data in Catholic elementary schools indicates that these schools have been losing market share in recent years. The decline in market share for Catholic elementary schools has happened at the same time as enrollment in Catholic elementary schools has stabilized. There were 1.883 million students enrolled in Catholic elementary schools, K-8, in 1990. By 1993, enrollment dropped slightly to 1.859 million. Yet the total elementary population in the United States had grown from 31.99 million in 1990 to 33.42 million in 1993. The proportion of students in Catholic elementary schools relative to the total population has been gradually eroding. Had Catholic schools attracted the same proportion of the elementary population in 1993 that they had in 1990, there would have been an additional 107,854 students in Catholic elementary schools in 1993, enough to fill 413 average schools.

There is another important factor in why some Catholic elementary schools have been closing their doors and fewer new Catholic schools have been opening. Between 1980 and 1993, the average parish school invested $224,516 beyond the cost of inflation to fund program revisions and to pay for other expenses, many of which were unavoidable (energy, insurance, pension benefits, etc.). But others were by design.

Not too many years ago, eight teachers, a principal, and a secretary staffed the school. In many schools, one teacher instructed a class in all subjects. No longer. Over the years, the teacher-to-student ratio has fallen, from 1 to 23.56 in 1980 to 1 to 17.75 in 1993 (*see*, table). In pursuit of quality education, teachers have specialized and the number of courses offered has increased. Classes in computers and music are now mandatory. Academic test scores suggest that the strategy has been successful.

Despite these successes, Catholic schools keep closing. Smaller parishes especially can no longer afford them. The flaw in the present financial arrangement lies not only with its reliance on the parish subsidy but also with its dependence on tuition as a primary source of revenue. In 1980, school tuition represented 2.3 percent of gross household income (about $490 for the year) for a family with children in a Catholic elementary school. By 1993, the average Catholic school household paid $1,470 in tuition, or 3.6 percent of its gross household income. This increased burden has meant that fewer and fewer households have been able to participate in Catholic schools.

The present funding model for Catholic elementary schools needs to be fixed. Parishes can no longer keep subsidizing schools at historic levels and tuition increases are pricing out too many families who might send their children to Catholic schools.

Staff Sizes and Pupil Teacher Ratios in Catholic Elementary Schools in the United States

1980–81 & 1993–94

	1980–81	1993–94
Religious Staff	24,898	10,982
Lay Teachers	71,841	100,400
Total Staff	96,739	112,199
Enrollment	2,279,639 (PK–8)	1,992,183 (PK–8)
Pupil-Teacher Ratio	23.56	17.75

Any new model for funding Catholic schools must include three basic elements: First, new funding appeals must seriously challenge all Catholic households; second, Catholic schools, particularly those in the inner cities, must seek support from the business community; and third, Catholics must actively seek government help for parents in the form of tuition vouchers.

The first step is for parishes to set goals to double their Sunday collections and to use at least 25 percent of the increased revenue to subsidize the school. This may sound like a pipe dream, but such a goal is realizable. There were an estimated 18.2 million households registered in Catholic parishes in 1991. Catholic household income, on average, was $40,879, and the aggregate Catholic household income was an estimated $744 billion. The total Sunday collection, however, was only $4.6 billion, or .6 percent of household income. By doubling the Sunday collection, Catholic parish finances (and schools) would get a tremendous boost. Yet doing so would only lift the Catholic giving rate to the level of most Protestant churches.

The second ingredient of any successful financial solution for Catholic elementary schools would include greater support from the business community. One such program

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

exists in Kansas City, Missouri. It is called the Central City School Fund, and it helps provide funding for six inner-city elementary schools and one high school. The diocese annually provides $800,000 and a board of directors raises $900,000 from the local business community. The combined program provides for about 30 percent of the schools' budgets.

The final element in maintaining and enhancing the Catholic school system involves government support in the form of tuition vouchers. Vouchers afford an avenue to gradually restructure Catholic school finances to truly include all—both the poor and the wealthy—who want this opportunity for their children. Such efforts are making headway in some states, but church-state questions and court challenges are impeding movement on this front. State legislatures in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Wisconsin recently considered and, in two states, Ohio and Wisconsin, voted to implement programs that could change the fiscal structure of Catholic schools.

Proponents of a successful voucher effort in Ohio targeted low-income students in Cleveland in a pilot project to give disadvantaged students an equal opportunity to participate in private education. Qualifying students will receive a scholarship not to exceed the lesser of $2,500 or the tuition of the alternative school. The Ohio state legislature allocated approximately $5 million for the program to begin in 1996.

A program passed this year by the Wisconsin legislature developed from existing voucher efforts in Milwaukee. The new voucher program differed from these previous efforts in that religious schools would be included. The new program was to expand coverage to about 7,250 students this fall and 15,700 students in 1996. Legislators allocated $19 million for the first year of the program and $38 million for 1996.

After Governor Tommy Thompson signed the legislation the American Civil Liberties Union filed suit, challenging the plan on constitutional grounds. In late August, the Wisconsin Supreme Court granted an injunction to suspend payments on the program until the court resolves the issue of whether such payments are constitutional. Dan McKinley, executive director of PAVE (Parents Advancing Values in Education), Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist, and a number of business leaders have challenged the community to raise funds to keep the voucher program afloat while the court test proceeds.

Catholic schools not only succeed where many public programs fail; they also provide effective religious education and impart both values and beliefs. All evidence points to the conclusion that Catholic schools will continue to be successful in these areas. But to maintain their strength and viability, the limits of the present parish-based funding model will have to be addressed and remedied. We need to consider new options that will allow as many Catholics as possible the opportunity to attend these schools. □

KING'S COLLEGE

Sponsored by the Congregation of the Holy Cross

AREA COORDINATOR

King's College is an independent co-educational institution currently enrolling 1800 full-time and 500 part-time students. In an open Catholic tradition, King's College fosters the religious, moral and social development of its students.

Within its residence halls, the College strives to create communities of faith and learning that serve as catalysts for the integration of students; intellectual, spiritual and social development.

Together with students serving as Residents Assistants and adults acting as Resident Counselors, the Area Coordinator educates, counsels and consoles, accompanies students in the life of faith and learning, and calls students to accountability with College behavioral expectations. The person filling this position acts as administrative judicial hearing officer. This position includes a collateral assignment as coordinator of educational programming for the campus. The Area Coordinator works closely with students, and in collaboration with faculty and administrators in meeting the mission of the College. Evening and weekend work required.

The College seeks an Area Coordinator who oversees two residence halls, housing 300 hundred residents, primarily freshman and sophomore women. The Coordinator supervises 8 Resident Assistants and 4 Resident Counselors. This is a full time, live in position for 12 months.

Qualifications: Master's degree in student personnel, counseling, pastoral ministry or related fields is preferred. Prior residence life experience is required.

Remuneration: Competitive salary, furnished one bedroom apartment, meal plan when classes are in session and college benefits.

To Apply: Send letter of application with resume and list of three references to: Rev. Gorski, C.S.C., Vice President for Student Affairs, King's College, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711 or FAX materials to: 717-825-9049. Position will be filled as soon as appropriate candidate is identified.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Richard Alleva

BOYS WITH CAMERAS

'Desperado' & 'The Brothers McMullen'

I told him not to do it (*see*, *Commonweal*, July 16, 1993). But he went right ahead and did it! Why don't movie directors listen to film critics? After all, we have only their best interests at heart.

In *El Mariachi*, the novice director Robert Rodriguez told a story fit for a comic book, and I don't mean one of those newfangled "graphic novels" but the old-fashioned, blotchy, low-down, subliterate kind. A naive young guitarist walks into a cutthroat town and is mistaken for a hired killer toting a gun inside his guitar case. Bad guys shoot at him, he ducks, finds a gun, shoots back, gets saved by a pretty girl, ducks more bullets. And that's it. Kiss kiss. Bang bang. But if the story was elementary, Rodriguez was a veritable rocket scientist when it came to low-budget filmmaking. (*El Mariachi* cost $7,000.) I observed in my review, "nobody in this film can so much as dive into a pool or flop down on a bed without Rodriguez showing the simplest action from a zillion different angles. The net result isn't arty, though, just jangling and kind of fun. Cubism for kids." But, knowing that Rodriguez had been offered a deal by Columbia to remake his movie with a bigger budget, I also feared he would "end up making something as well upholstered as *Dave*."

It would be a pleasure to eat my words, but alas, I am proved a prophet.

What we have in *Desperado* is just another slick, faultlessly crafted and totally uninteresting blood bath. With more bucks to spend, Rodriguez can now move his camera, pan and dolly and zoom, and achieve longer takes, and he doesn't have to resort to jigsaw-puzzle editing. But that jigsaw-puzzle editing was Rodriguez's only claim to style. Without it, he has none, only efficiency. (And sometimes not even that. In the last scene, a weapon case tossed away from a highway suddenly reappears a few shots later right back on the highway. Rodriguez didn't shoot enough footage, apparently. Old habits die hard.)

There is no suspense in *Desperado*, little wit, and none of the sanguinary lyricism Sam Peckinpah brought to *The Wild Bunch* or even the sheer hatred that infused Oliver Stone's disgusting *Natural Born Killers*. *Desperado* is too violent to be taken as a parody of the action movie genre, yet it's too facetious to be taken straight. It's a kung-fu flick with bullets instead of karate chops. And it's a high-tech bore.

But, let me hasten to add, it's not capitalism that has done in Rodriguez but a basic story-telling blunder. In *El Mariachi*, the exhilaration of the fighting sequences was in seeing how the lovably bumbling hero *escaped*, not in how many guys he killed. In *Desperado*, the revamped hero, now played by glamorous Antonio Banderas, knows how to handle a gun right from the start of the movie. Rather than rejoicing each time he escapes, we're supposed to be turned on by the sheer volume of slaughter. Jack the Giant Killer has turned into Giant the Giant Killer. That's not as much fun.

How many ways can bodies fall? How many shades of red does blood have? You can sense Rodriguez's desperation when he has his characters go in for corpse abuse, with Banderas slamming a dead man's head against a bar and shooting an already lifeless foe tumbling down some steps. What's next on the ultraviolent movie scene? I'm afraid to guess.

The only scene that entertains is the first one, in which the hero's nonviolent pal, played by Steve Buscemi, keeps a barful of toughs spellbound by a tall tale as he cadges beers from a grumpy bartender. So the only good thing in all this carnage is a funny monologue expertly delivered by an endearing actor. Naturally, peacemaker Buscemi has to be killed off a third of the way through so that Banderas must head on the vengeance trail. When a filmmaker has to kill off the best actor in sight in order to keep his movie commercially viable, he's in big trouble, no matter how much money *Desperado* makes.

The Brothers McMullen would seem to be the antithesis of, and the antidote to, movies like *Desperado*. For Edward Burns's film was made on a miniscule budget, has no special effects, and is packed with heart-to-heart confessions and confrontations instead of bullets and bad guys. But dramatic potency isn't guaranteed by a tight budget.

Working under spartan conditions, the independent filmmaker can succeed in two ways: he or she can be, like Rod-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

riguez, a virtuoso of photography and editing; or—like the young Woody Allen or John Cassavetes—he must rely on a script of such power or wit (fleshed out, of course, by good acting) that we put up with less-than-elegant imagery. All the better if the director can display both filmic know-how and dramatic depth. *The Brothers McMullen* has neither.

Near the grave of her newly deceased and always unloved husband, Mrs. McMullen tells her middle child, Barry, that she is returning to Ireland to live with the sweetheart of her youth, and she warns her son that he must never "make the same mistake I made." Curiously, only her youngest son, Patrick, understands the positive side of her warning—cleave only to the one you truly love. The other two boys twist it to mean that you shouldn't commit yourself to anyone. Jack, the eldest, is in love with his wife but cheats on her, while Barry hops from bed to bed. Even the idealistic Patrick is about to marry for convenience rather than love; then he waffles. The rest of the movie shows the brothers, laboring under a heavy load of Irish-Catholic guilt, slowly but surely coming to a realization of what their mother's warning really meant. Burns never loses track of his theme, but he pursues it only doggedly, without making any of the intuitive leaps that render a story truly interesting. His direction lacks invention and sometimes even common sense. Take that opening scene with Mrs. McMullen and Barry. Burns had wanted to shoot it in the context of a funeral cortege but, unable to afford extras or costumes, he settled for a simple confrontation in an otherwise deserted cemetery. Fine. But, having made that decision, he established no geographic relation between his actors and the grave of the unloved dead man whose baleful influence is to be felt throughout the rest of the movie. You can't tell if mother and son are standing near the grave or have walked away from it. The two simply face each other and talk. Burns might just as well have staged it in a kitchen or on a porch. The entire setting goes to waste.

Given his budget, Burns quite rightly opted for simple set-ups with minimal movement, but he hasn't learned how to use composition and movement to subtly inflect a scene. When he has an actor sit down on a bed during a chat, the placement seems a mechanical attempt at visual variety rather than a natural act arising out of the situation. A low budget doesn't excuse this.

Burns shows some promise as a writer. Comparisons with Woody Allen have been overdone, but Burns does have a similar wry wit about his ethnicity and religion. Some of the joshing and jabbing among the brothers has the right rough-housing camaraderie. But the scenes between men and women feature too many lines like, "Do you think we've lost the romance in our marriage?" And Burns doesn't follow through on his more interesting insights. For instance, the sexual adventuress who almost torpedoes Jack's marriage is first smitten with him when she hears Jack deliver a gracious birthday toast to his wife. Does she want such love for herself, or does she have a pathological hatred of married love? We never find out because Burns turns her into a standard soap opera predator.

There are eight significant characters, but only two of them are well acted. Jack Mulcahy, as the married McMullen, has craggy authority and conveys the quiet agony of a good man suddenly aware of the friability of his moral backbone. Connie Britton turns the forbidding role of Jack's Perfect Wife into a completely believable woman. Britton possesses uncloying, almost piercing sweetness. Jennifer Jostyn, as the woman who wins Patrick, has a smile that could light up Stockholm in midwinter but needs to stop relying on it. The director himself gives the film's worst performance as Barry. In his scenes with Maxine Bahms, both actors commit the cardinal vocal sin of realistic acting: they unconsciously pick up each other's rhythms and pitches instead of working for contrast and variety.

Perhaps Robert Rodriguez and Edward Burns should have lunch together. One has technical flash. The other has humanistic fervor. They might quarrel each other into accomplishing something truly interesting. □

Society of the Divine Word Gift Annuities
Western Province

Fr. Pons Ramos, SVD
Development Director
Provincial Treasurer

You Can Increase Your Security

If you are over 55, a Society of the Divine Word Gift Annuity can enhance your financial planning for retirement. At a time in your life when you need every cent of your income, why risk unstable markets plus unnecessary taxes.

High Rates of Return

Your Society of the Divine Word Gift Annuity will bring you high rates of return and significant tax savings while you help to educate priests and brothers for our home and overseas missions. For example, a man (age 70) would enjoy an annual return of 8.7%.

Tax Advantages

Because the income from your gift annuity is classified in part as a return of principal, which was a charitable donation, some of those dollars will be tax-exempt.

Complete Safety

The Society of the Divine Word pioneered the first Catholic-sponsored annuity program in the United States in 1904. For over 90 years, our annuitants have enjoyed the security of a reliable income and the satisfaction of knowing they're doing their part to bring God's love to the poor.

Choose Security and Satisfaction Now

You can make a living on your investments, but you can only make a life on what you give. A Society of the Divine Word Gift Annuity will help you do both. Send now for details.

The Society of the Divine Word is a worldwide Catholic mission society committed to preaching the Gospel in 60 countries.

PLEASE MAIL TO:
Society of the Divine Word - *Western Province*
P.O. Box 5267
Riverside, CA 92517-5267

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ **ZIP** _____
_____ **Birthdate**
(for single life gift annuity)
_____ **Birthdate**
(for second person in a joint/survivorship gift annuity)

Please indicate the amount of the annuity you are considering:
❑ $1,000 ❑ $5,000 ❑ $10,000
❑ $25,000 ❑ $50,000 ❑ Other $ _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bewildered at being a man

Big as Life
Stories about Men
Rand Richards Cooper
The Dial Press, $21.95, 324 pp.

Cold Snap
Thom Jones
Little, Brown and Company, $19.95, 288 pp.

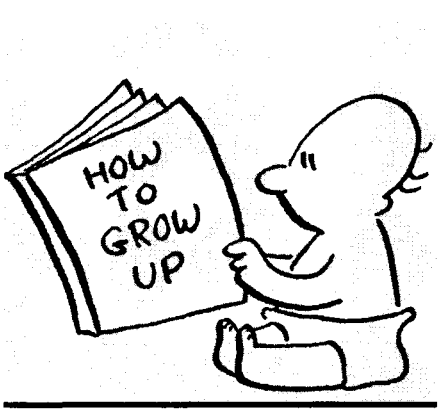
Elizabeth Beverly

The most perplexing problem presented these days by a book-sized collection of short stories written by a single author is that the truly wonderful stories—and there are almost always at least two—tend to make the other less-than-wonderful stories, those that may be simply good or even just okay, seem downright embarrassing. Why, when the writer can write something great, does he or she choose to publish something merely competent? The notable strengths of the perfectly wrought story, in which voice and vision effortlessly fuse in order to embody character and plot, are detected as crudely realized impulses in the lesser stories. The author's obsessions and habits begin to look like annoying writerly tics rather than gifts of spirit or craft. The reader's greedy desire, whetted by excellence, won't be satisfied by sentences that plod instead of startle or sing.

And amid all these doubts, the miraculous quality of the great story fades, precisely because the reader begins to learn more about the author—his habits, missteps, indulgences—than about the characters who bear witness to the author's vision. The "trick" of fiction fails—its ability to deliver us straight through language to the realm of the inexpressible, though common, experience of living. Instead of wondering about the meaning of our own lives, we begin to wonder about the personality of the person who tries, again and again, to jump-start a fantasy that never quite takes off.

Both *Big As Life: Stories about Men* by Rand Richards Cooper and *Cold Snap* by Thom Jones contain several great stories, the kind that expand the reader's world by sweeping him or her into someone else's consciousness so deftly that, for a few moments, reading about that life feels more urgent than living one's own. Quite simply, these stories are grand achievements, stories that transcend their moment of composition. But Cooper's "Going the Distance" and Jones's "Superman, My Son" are not the only stories in these volumes, and, literary merit aside, these pieces, taken along with their companions, can provide us with some insight into the creative preoccupations of the two late twentieth-century American men who wrote them.

It is noteworthy that, despite vast differences in style, despite a display of defensive tics ranging from intellectual detachment to rowdy bluster, both Cooper and Jones seem terrifically befuddled by just what it means to be male and American at this particular historical moment. And although Jones wants to grab his readers by the throat and immediately dunk them into the current of this frenzied "unknowing"—just take a trip through his opening sentences—and Cooper depends on his narratives to work by engaging his readers' intellects—just read his volume's subtitle—both writers demonstrate an almost old-fashioned hope that simple storytelling can begin to clear things up for us all.



The ostensible similarities between these authors: an interest in Africa, in boxing, in the military, belie their striking differences in style. Jones is nervy and nervous at once, sputtering and ranting, letting his mind seem to zing randomly off the surface of the stuff of life. Cooper is much subtler; no linguistic razzle-dazzle is in evidence, and almost all of the stories proceed at the same cautious, studied pace. Yet these stylistic differences can mask a profound ideological similarity: a mounting conviction that people are doomed to an awful, at times grotesque, loneliness that no amount of talking can overcome. Both men use the vehicle of the story to trace the social heritage of such loneliness and to let the reader experience just how awful and inexorable this state can feel.

For Jones, the isolation occurs at the level of the human organism. One thinks of the great Russians, Dostoevski and Nabokov. Their thematic awareness of the ability of individual consciousness to shape and infuse "objective reality" with meaning infused their own fiction with a breathless and nearly miraculous luminosity and seriousness. But Jones's grasp of consciousness has been degraded by scientific awareness; a little learning has become a dangerous, and at times boring, thing. His narrators and his characters for the most part wallow in a neuronally charged chemical bath from which there is no escape.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The temporal lobe, the pancreas, the heart, secrete their own juices; human medication, legal and illegal, mixes the concoction into a brew that determines the course of one's life. Jones doesn't simply write about these states; his narrators are mired there.

And although to contemporary readers such visceral narration may sound innovative and shocking, it often sounds highly reminiscent of much of the swooning, though sincere, work of the English Romantics: Shelley, Lord Byron, Coleridge, when the opium was delivering the visions. The claustrophobic self-awareness, the narcissistic sense of naughtiness, can feel like entrapment to the reader. However, when Jones is working at his best, as in the title story, the narrator's own quirkiness displaces his creator's, and the story opens more widely and more wonderfully than its elements suggest. In fact, it is precisely when Jones's inventions begin to undermine his writerly habits that the visionary potential of his style emerges, as when the elderly father in "Superman, My Son" displays an acutely critical, yet unabashed and tender love for his wrecked son, daughter-in-law, and nephew. At a moment such as this, the reader is swept by the power of story to forge belief in basic human decency despite all despair; such grace cannot be easily accounted for.

In contrast to Jones, whose characters almost always feel throttled by biological imperatives, Cooper keeps his distance from the individual body and focuses instead on the social and cultural norms that sweep individuals into the currents of action. Although the tone of the resulting stories is completely different, the outcome for the characters is heart-rendingly similar: the sense that one has no control over one's life. Cooper, too, hearkens back to a basic Romantic tenet that is foundational to current American therapeutic belief: Childhood is a time of unintentional innocence which is often warped by adult interpretation and remedy. The late twentieth-century twist that makes this tenet doubly moving resides in the assumption that we are all still inhabited by inner children who have not yet been totally corrupted; hence, just as childhood is without end, so is the chance to be dashed even in great old age.

Cooper inhabits the same terrain as certain great suburban/urban intellectuals like Katherine Mansfield, John Updike, John Cheever, who display a belief that life is made up of a series of societally determined developmental moments which seal one's fate. For the writer, these moments are fraught with significance even though an individual character may remain clueless as to the role they play. The authorial detachment required to pull off the now common narrative feat of informing the reader, while at the same time pulling the wool over a character's eyes, results in a mild irony that has grown so familiar to our ears that we may no longer detect it. Instead the tone is at once earnest and blasé, a slightly bewildering combination. So when Cooper charts the vulnerable transitions in men's lives, we hear the various ways in which unusually sensitive, intelligent boys are trained to be bewildered guys, always running the risk of being perceived as rougher, more devious, more wicked than they really are.

"Seeming" matters to these guys. If Jones's characters tend to demonstrate an almost studied indifference to the opinions of others (although one suspects they'd be horrified to learn they resembled "normal" suburban guys), Cooper's characters want to appear to be just as good as they know they really are. To be misunderstood is not simply a sign of isolation; it embodies the moral predicament of the good, late twentieth-century man. Yes, gender plays a role. How does a man convince a woman of his goodness without squelching that woman's right to see him through her own eyes? And if men cannot see one another accurately, how can women see them at all? This undercurrent of concern hums throughout numerous stories.

But just as Jones hits his stride when his stories seem to explode beyond the boundaries of his intentions, so does Cooper. "A Soldier Loyal and True" starts as a somewhat choppy narrative inquiry into a harsh father's love for his daughter and then magically lifts into a story about the saving grace of imagination to grant infinite chances for redemption. And "Going the Distance,"

STANFORD UNIVERSITY

ASSOCIATE DEAN OF STANFORD MEMORIAL CHURCH

Stanford University invites applications and nominations for the position of Associate Dean of Memorial Church, to start in spring/summer of 1996. The Associate Dean, reporting to the Dean of the Chapel and collaborating closely with Memorial Church staff, has particular responsibility for ministry to undergraduate students, but serves other students, faculty, staff, and their families as well. She/He is expected to offer programs that engage important spiritual, ethical, and communal/social issues, to provide leadership in conducting public worship and academic ceremonies, to work cooperatively with student groups and university offices (for example, interfaith study group, women's center, athletic teams, gay and lesbian student association, residence advisors), and to be available as a counselor in spiritual, vocational, and personal matters. The Associate Dean, who may be a member of any recognized faith community, will have the academic and religious training and credentials requisite for leadership in a university setting.

Stanford Memorial Church is a venue for meditation and reflection, for Christian worship (Protestant and Catholic), for interfaith celebrations, and for musical performances. Its Deans are involved in the full range of University life, with its rich cultural and religious diversity. Memorial Church sponsors and oversees the multifaith group of independent campus ministries that serve students' desires for engagement in particular faith communities.

Applicants should send a *curriculum vitae* and a list of three suggested referees. Selection of candidates will begin in November, continuing until the position is filled. Stanford University and Memorial Church are committed to equal opportunity hiring, and applications from women, ethnic minorities, and disabled individuals are welcome. Address applications and nominations to: Robert C. Gregg, Dean, Memorial Church, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in its simple, forthright presentation of a feisty old bastard who cannot see how his cruel gifts have blossomed in his grown son's life, blasts free of Cooper's ideological determinism by allowing the situation its full complexity.

Perhaps I am old-fashioned in my belief that the brilliant quirkiness of the four stories cited (plus several others) would be more noticeable if the authors had waited until they'd written a few more wonderful pieces to shape their collections, but then we would have had to wait too, not even knowing that we were waiting. And as both of these men attest, knowing anything at all beats knowing nothing, particularly when a millennium is ticking to its close. □

Elizabeth Beverly *is a writer and ethnographer who teaches at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon.*

THE MAN WHO STOLE CONGRESS

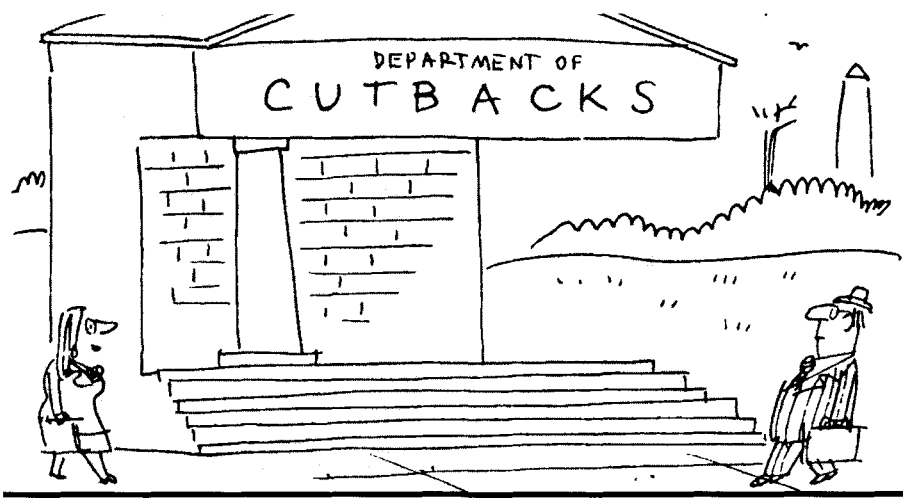
To Renew America
Newt Gingrich
HarperCollins, $24, 260 pp.

James Duffy

Addressing the Republican National Committee last January, Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich had this to say about his controversial agreement with Rupert Murdoch's publishing company: "I am going to write a book. I don't know whether it is going to be a good book or a bad book....If people want to buy it, Marianne [his wife] and I will probably do pretty well. If people don't want to buy it, we probably won't do very well. This is a system called free enterprise. The socialists in the Democratic party don't quite get it."

The speaker was half right. *To Renew America* is a best-selling success for its author. But it is a bad, or at least a mediocre, piece of work, cobbled together from speeches and (presumably) from the materials for the history course he has taught in Georgia and on the Mind Extension TV channel. It must be said, however, that some of Gingrich's more provocative public utterances are omitted—the characterization of Democrats as "socialists," for example, or the bashing of public broadcasting. And there's nary a word about the Christian Right, abortion, or school prayer, just the hope that our social problems will be solved by the "volunteerism" of our "churches, synagogues, and mosques." (Trendy!)

The original portions of the book, dealing with the Contract with America, are surprisingly tepid. The contract may or may not be "the most radical and important conservative manifesto of our times," as Lady Margaret Thatcher has characterized it, but the recounting of its procedural implementation in the House is comparable to a description of grass growing.



Gingrich's thinking reflects several Republican traditions, albeit in my view the wrong ones. He resembles Nixon in his near-paranoid assaults on the "whining" left-wing media, "liberals" (undefined), and vague and sinister "elites." Despite nods to the likes of de Tocqueville and Arnold Toynbee, a Nixonian anti-intellectual tone often surfaces. The history Ph.D. points out gleefully that Bill Gates and Steve Jobs were college dropouts, and notes that seven of the last ten presidents did not attend "elite" colleges. (A parlor game for you. There's Harvard and Yale, but what is the third "elite" college? West Point? Georgetown? Michigan?)

Gingrich is Reaganesque in his resort to the unsubstantiated anecdote; there's no vodka-swilling welfare queen, but we do have the welfare mother "punished for sewing her daughter's clothing and saving on food stamps" so she can put money aside for her daughter's education. Like Reagan, he also treats movies as reality, drawing morals from *Star Wars* and the remake of *The Last of the Mohicans*.

His "twenty-first-century vision" for America draws on a heady combination of futurism—Alvin Toeffler variety—and science fiction à la Isaac Asimov and Arthur C. Clarke. Thus in health care we can expect a system unfettered by the doctors' "trade guild" (or the Food and Drug Administration for that matter) that will allow the patient, through "telemedicine," to handle most ailments by computerized self-diagnosis. (The legal profession will wither away, too, as people write their wills and contracts aided by programs on their PCs.) As for education, individuals will instruct themselves over a lifetime via computer—a sort of Calvert School in cyberspace. Never mind the absence of the personal element that most would find essential: the doctor who breaks the news of a fatal illness, the lawyer who gives his best judgment as to the pros and cons of a course of action, the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

teacher who is a role model.

The speaker's book is replete with lists: the six major challenges to our society ("renewing" American civilization; accelerating the Information Age; improving U.S. competitiveness in world trade; replacing the "welfare state"; decentralizing government; and balancing the federal budget), the five principles of our civilization, the eight reforms needed to change the welfare system, and so on and so on. Everything but a twelve-step program for political junkies.

When one strips away the futurism, the anecdotes, the lists, and the occasional personal reminiscences, what is left is a hard-nut reactionary agenda, the goal of which is not just to gut the detested "bureaucracy" and shift power to state and local government. It is more, as we learn in this burst of candor:

> We are not simply trying to move a few offices out of Washington....We are trying to reestablish the American value of individual liberty *and the citizens' first claim to their own money*....The last sixty years has [*sic*] seen so much centralization in Washington that at this point the best we can do is to start by shifting power back to the state capitals....*Yet our ultimate goal is to move power even beyond the state capitals....[W]hat we really want to do is devolve power all the way out of government and back to working American families.* We want to leave choices and resources in the hands of individuals and let them decide if they prefer government, the profit-making sector, the nonprofit sector, *or even no solution at all to their problems*....[F]reedom ultimately includes the right to say no" [emphasis added].

There it is. Good old-fashioned get-off-my-back-and-lower-my-taxes conservative radicalism. Thy brother's keeper? Forget it. The contract, the revolution, the devolution, or whatever one chooses to call it, is a reversion to another Republican tradition going back at least to Calvin Coolidge. But Gingrich the erstwhile history professor might ponder these words of Herbert Hoover, written in 1922:

> We have long since abandoned the *laissez faire* of the eighteenth century—the notion that it is "every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost." We abandoned that when we adopted the ideal of equality of opportunity....We have confirmed its abandonment in terms of legislation, of social and economic justice—in part because we have learned that social injustice is the destruction of justice itself.

(Readers should note that if they call 1-800-TO-RENEW they can order videotapes of the speaker's course lectures on renewing America for a bargain $159.95.) □

James Duffy *is a writer and former lawyer living in New York. He is the author of* Domestic Affairs: American Programs and Priorities. *Writing as Haughton Murphy, he is the author of the Reuben Frost mystery novels.*

THE POETRY OF REAL ESTATE

Independence Day

Richard Ford

Alfred A. Knopf, $24, 451 pp.

Raymond A. Schroth

One of my regrets about not having money is that I'll never be able to buy a house. Still, I cannot jog the oak-lined streets of Uptown New Orleans or bike up Storm King Mountain at Cornwall-on-Hudson without casing every house I pass and asking if that house is "me."

Which is why, perhaps, Richard Ford, in his new novel, *Independence Day*, his continuation of *The Sportswriter* (1986), has moved Frank Bascombe, his narrator and protagonist, from sports magazine journalism into the real-estate business. For the realtor, if he has moved his science to the level of art, is part social historian, part character analyst. He daily redraws the line of the shifting American Frontier—charts the highways, Shop Rite malls, suburban enclaves, shrines, motels, trailer parks, and honky tonks which speckle the skin over the American soul—and matches this particular acre with its two-bedroom clapboard bungalow with this particular migrant family's dream.

When we left Frank Bascombe in Easter week six years ago, he was thirty-eight, a Haddam (Princeton), New Jersey, recently divorced father of a boy and girl and a dead son whom he and his ex-wife (called "X") still mourned. He was a good, though rootless, man, a seeker who struck others as having a "sense of ethics," though he consistently denies having the admirable traits which others perceive. Then he was ready for a fling in Florida with Cathy Flaherty, a Dartmouth student who admired his writing. We liked Frank, perhaps because he didn't judge, and we thought he might like us; and we wondered—hoping—whether he would return to his wife and to the serious fiction from which sportswriting had distracted him.

When we pick him up this 1988 fourth-of-July weekend, Frank is forty-four, and he and the nation which he both embodies and meticulously observes have, like an untended piece of property, gone down. Bush and Dukakis are squabbling for the presidency; Frank's wife Ann has married a rich, sixty-one-year-old architect, who "knows Bush," and taken the children to Connecticut. Frank has moved into Ann's former house in Haddam, has had his fling with Cathy in France, had another affair with a black real-estate partner who was later raped and murdered, keeps a girlfriend Sally in Mantoloking, and strives to apply his Good Samaritan instincts to real estate, taking good care of his two properties in a black neighborhood and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dealing fairly and patiently with a thuggish client couple from Vermont. His plan: "to do for others while looking after Number One." Friends describe him as "sweet" and "priestly"; but we like him a little less. Perhaps as a sign of how American culture has coarsened, so has Frank's narrative vocabulary, and he occasionally addresses us in a vulgar lingo—of which *The Sportswriter* was relatively free.

Though *Independence Day* opens with Frank's seriocomic analysis of the Haddam real-estate business as the town gears up for the holiday weekend, the novel's focus soon becomes Frank's troubled fifteen-year-old son Paul. Frank fears the boy, once a lover of pigeons, may have killed a grackle just for kicks. Paul has grown fat, sloppy, and injury-prone, been arrested for shoplifting condoms, slugged his stepfather, and wrecked the family car. He goes around barking for his long-dead dog, and, in banter with his father, likes to talk dirty.

By his own lights as good a parent as he can be, Frank plans to "rescue" the boy by taking him on a holiday tour of the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts, and the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. He will impart his fatherly wisdom, and, at the same time, by having Paul read the Declaration of Independence and Emerson's "Self Reliance," and by chatting in the car about Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, he will enlist American history in his struggle for the boy's salvation. Ironically, Frank is also reverting to sports nostalgia, which Ford eviscerated in *The Sportswriter*, as if Cooperstown were an American Mecca, or Rome, or Lourdes, where exposure to the Great Pastime in its purest form could heal the scars of death and divorce.

Displaying again his astonishing mastery of New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New York roadmaps—their physical as well as moral landscapes—Ford sweeps us in a four-day whirl through an election-year America which de Tocqueville foretold—filled with ambitious men but empty of lofty ambitions: Where Roy Rogers is not a cowboy hero but a fast-food joint on the Jersey Turnpike, where virtually everyone is divorced, where murder is almost as commonplace as the car alarm whining and whooping in the night, where the suspicious-looking Mexican youths cruising by your hot dog stand really are getting set to rob you, where the neighborhood cop or the "polite" security guard with the gold stud in his ear symbolizes not security but the intimations of the coming police state.

And where, especially if we have read Ford's other books, we sense a catastrophe lurking around the bend. Yet Ford's men and women, though they suffer from the American virus of excessive individualism, yearn to be connected. In one startling, yet plausible, surprise, Frank's long-lost Jewish half-brother appears like a biblical angel at a moment of crisis to remind him of the hidden continuity that has linked his life. Though they celebrate "independence," Ford's characters are obviously dependent on one another, as if each one were a bird with one wounded wing who by hooking up with the other birds could flutter to safety. The implements of their connectedness—cellular phones, gas station pay phones, voice mail, helicopters, sex manuals, the *Trenton Times*, a discarded volume of Frank's short stories, routes 1, 91, and 84, and a people-mover in the Basketball Hall of Fame arena from which the tourists shoot baskets—are hardly spiritual. But occasionally they make possible what Ford terms that "Sistine Chapel touch," when two fingertips meet, and Richard Ford continues to create, in this stunning book, what William Dean Howells stated as his own goal, a "literature worthy of America." □

Raymond A. Schroth, S.J., *is a professor of journalism at Loyola University in New Orleans.*

A MAJOR PLAYER

Religion
The Missing Dimension of Statecraft
Edited by Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson
Oxford University Press, $35, 350 pp.

James Finn

This is a book whose time has come. Although the phenomenon it examines is not new—the exclusion of religion as a factor in statecraft—recent events have created a climate in which it may be more readily acknowledged, even, possibly, corrected. As an augury of this possibility the book carries a favorable blurb from Henry Kissinger, a high practitioner of *Realpolitik*, and the author of a recent, admirable 900-page book titled *Diplomacy*, the index of which has many references to Poland but is completely innocent of a reference to religion or John Paul II.

In his acknowledgments Douglas Johnston explains that the genesis of the book sprang from his growing awareness that various conflicts in the world were being reconciled, often by religious agents and agencies, in ways that were not being recognized. This insight led gradually to meetings, steering committees, a slew of expert consultants, grants, assignments, contributors and, consequently, this book. The process itself extended over a number of years and the book reveals a number of the tensions that inevitably arise when people with different experiences and different interests but strong views collaborate. The book also moves along two different paths. Some of the writers wish to show the positive character of religious agencies as mediators of conflict. Others stress that religion can be a force to reckon with when it is divisive as well as when it is healing, when it is the cause of conflict as well as when it mediates; good foreign policies should take ac-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

count of both aspects.

The core of the book consists of a series of case histories that illustrate the way in which religious agents and agencies have acted in various kinds of conflicts. These range widely to areas that include Nicaragua, Nigeria, East Germany, the Philippines, South Africa, and Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. These well-researched and frequently detailed studies illustrate very well how religious actors have successfully resolved or, at least, reduced conflict and have proven to be very effective mediators. Johnston notes that although he and his colleagues made a concerted effort to find cases that would represent different problems and different religious traditions, these examples are heavily weighted in favor of Christianity. Comparable studies involving other religious traditions have yet to be made.

These case histories bear most heavily the mark of the initiating impulse, that is, they are focused on conflict resolution. But statecraft extends far beyond that. Sound statecraft depends upon proper appreciation of the major factors in play and, to speak only of U.S. policies, religion is very frequently omitted from consideration as one of those factors. The result is an inadequate understanding of the forces at work and, therefore, inadequate policies.

Two fine opening articles by Edward Luttwak and Barry Rubin—familiar names in the field of international affairs—focus exactly on this issue. Rubin opens his article with the clear assertion that "United States foreign policy in recent decades has often misread the importance of religion as a factor in the national policies and international behavior of some countries and regions. This has sometimes led to incorrect analysis and erroneous policy responses that have proven quite costly." In complete agreement with this judgment, Luttwak locates the cause for the failure in continuing Enlightenment prejudice, materialistic determinism, and a secularizing reductionism. Although recent historical events make abundantly evident that religion is not fading from the world scene and is, in a number of countries, asserting ever greater cultural and political influence, many policy makers, out of habit or inertia, cling to the expectation that it is a declining and even negligible quantity. (Paradoxically, it is often those who claim to be political realists who make this unrealistic assessment.) Luttwak shows how a misreading of religious forces led to unsound U.S. analyses in Lebanon, Vietnam, Sudan, and Iran.

In a summing up near the end of the book, Stanton Burnett offers an overview and a nuanced assessment. He is intent on making clear that "the authors in this volume are not indicting U.S. diplomacy. We write about it because it is ours, and because of the hope we invest in the demonstrated seriousness and flexibility of its officials." He adds, however, that those who make policy and engage in diplomacy have a real interest in understanding the role of the spiritual in conflict resolution, "an idea that may seem hopelessly idealistic to a practicing politician or diplomat without the historical record offered by the cases to demonstrate that such a role was actual and effective in important past instances." The benefits of such understanding "are not precisely calculable but are clearly enormous."

After the analyses that constitute most of the book it is disconcerting to read Johnston's conclusions: "The central lesson of these case studies is that religion does not always have to be a negative factor in the policymaking equation. Its potential contribution to peacemaking is substantial and worthy of further study." Modesty may be called for, but such diffidence is deflating. The central message of this book can legitimately be phrased in stronger and more compelling terms.

There are some grammatical errors in this study, John Berryman's name is misspelled, and a remark attributed to John Foster Dulles but judged to be apocryphal was in fact made by a U.S. representative, Warren Austin, at the United Nations. □

James Finn *is senior editor of* Freedom Review, *a bimonthly magazine published by Freedom House.*

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 4)

ward totalitarianism.

(REV.) EDWARD J. MCKENNA
Riverdale, Ill.

What Title VII wrought

In contrast with most of the scholarly (and convoluted) articles on affirmative action so prevalent in the media these days, this is simply a report on hiring practices that I have experienced in more than forty years of personnel and labor relations work. During those decades, I was employed by three different national firms.

Until the adoption of the 1964 Civil Rights Act—especially its Title VII, barring employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin—these three major employers all practiced a type of affirmative action, but it was designed for, and almost wholly restricted to, white males under forty-five

Andrew Sullivan's
unprecedented book
VIRTUALLY NORMAL
A moral and political argument about homosexuality that people of faith everywhere will want to read
"From the first page, one gets the impression that something important is happening here...a new politics of civility" —Library Journal
Just published by Knopf

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

years of age. One of these employers for years had a written guideline in its policy manual restricting employment to white males within specified age ranges for all positions (including clerical, since females were not eligible for promotion into supervision or management).

Given this state of affairs, Title VII was simply a traffic signal on the long highway toward the goal of equal opportunity in employment. Or a stop sign reminding us to cease denying equal rights to a large percentage of our population.

Though it was approved on July 2, 1964, Title VII had an effective date of July 2, 1965, to provide covered employers a year to review their policies and make whatever changes were required to conform. Employment personnel soon learned that a policy change wasn't enough to change the make-up of the applicant flow, because those potentially affected had learned from experience that their applications would be denied or discarded. That is why affirmative action, in the form of reaching out to the previously denied, was required. It was a test of sincerity whether employers sought out recruits in churches, neighborhood organizations, and similar milieux.

In 1964, the National Association of Manufacturers conducted informational sessions in twenty-two cities, and then published talks given at these sessions along with the text of the new law in a book titled *A Tale of 22 Cities*. Most large employers responded favorably and, by imaginative departures in recruitment, brought thousands of those previously denied into the mainstream workplace. Although "Management Awareness Sessions" were often required, vast changes in the workplace were to be noted even in those early days of Title VII.

Today, many of these men and women of previously denied groups are now in very responsible professional and management positions. A visit to any major airport on a weekday will demonstrate the changes, if one but observes the flight crews and briefcase-carrying executives rushing to their destinations.

Rather than look for guidance on the future of affirmative action to political figures in Washington bowing to their political action committees, a call should be made for a major meeting to learn the views of those in industry, religion, the professions, education, and labor who face the real world daily. Just their mix will tell the story. Above all, let's not return to the days of affirmative action only for white males under forty-five years of age.

WALTER G. HOOKE
Cambridge, N.Y.

Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation (act of August 12, 1970: Section 3685, Title 39, United States Code). 1. Title of publication: COMMONWEAL. 2. Date of filing: September 28, 1995. 3. Frequency of issue: published biweekly except Christmas, New Year's and monthly July and August. A. No. of issues published annually: 22. B. Annual subscription price: $39. 4. Location of known office of publication: 15 Dutch St., New York, NY 10038. 5. Location of the headquarters of general business offices of the publishers: 15 Dutch St., New York, NY 10038. 6. Names and addresses of publisher, editor and managing editor: Publisher, Edward S. Skillin, 15 Dutch St., New York, NY 10038. Editor, Margaret O'Brien Steinfels, 15 Dutch St., New York, NY 10038. Managing Editor, Patrick Jordan, 15 Dutch St., New York, NY 10038. 7. Owner (if owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately there under the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of stock): Commonweal Foundation, 15 Dutch St., New York, NY 10038. 8. Known bondholders, mortgagees and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities: None. 9. The purpose, function and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for Federal income tax purposes have not changed during preceding 12 months. 10. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: A. Total no. copies printed (Net Press Run): 20,458. B. Paid Circulation: 1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales: 755. 2. Mail subscriptions: 17,605. C. Total paid circulation: 18,360. D. Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means, sample complimentary and other free copies: 725. E. Total distribution (sum of C and D): 19,085. F. 1. Office use, left over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing: 825. 2. Returns from news agents: 548. G. Total (sum of E and F should equal net press run shown in A): 20,458. Actual number of copies of a single issue published nearest to filing date: Total number copies printed (Net Press Run): 21,148. B. Paid Circulation: 1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales: 700. 2. Mail subscriptions: 18,437. C. Total paid circulation: 19,137. D. Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means, sample complimentary and other free copies: 762. E. Total distribution (sum of C and D): 19,899. F. 1 Office use, left over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing: 699. 2. Returns from news agents: 550. Total (sum of E and F should equal net press run shown in A): 21,148. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete. Richard Haas, Business Manager.

Playing with words

In his Notebook, "Word Maestro at Play" (July 14), Robert Hoyt has earned his cybercertificate—and made my day. His infectious gamesmanship brought to mind Chesterton's observation that one sign of high civilization is the capacity for "tremendous trivia." Perhaps Hoyt will himself devise a word game for us—"The Joy of Lex."

Another game, "Word Squirm," is my own desperate effort to escape the deplorably awkward though gender-sensitive "he/she," "his/her," "him/her" constructions that can clutter a graceful sentence like oil derricks atop the Acropolis. What if, when essaying inclusivity, we were to echo the plural "they," "their," "them" (since "gender" assumes plurality) with some such forms as "dey," "deir," and "dem"? Hence: "Everyone should assert *deir* independence when *dey* feel some demagogue is threatening *dem*." Not only do we return the sentence to its essential svelte; in the process, we canonize that basic American Brooklynese so long denied respectability.

Let the games commence!

John J. Savant
San Rafael, Calif.

CLASSIFIED

RATES: 90¢ per word; 12 words minimum. Advance payment required. Discounts and monthly billing available for repeat advertisers. For additional information call 212-732-0800 or write COMMONWEAL, 15 Dutch St., Room 502, NYC 10038-3760.

Books Available

Still Looking for a Book? Free Search. Sperling Books, 160 E. 38th St., 25–ECW, N.Y., N.Y. 10016.

Manuscripts

MANUSCRIPTS WANTED. ALL TYPES. Subsidy Publisher with 75-year tradition. 1-800-695-9599.

Sabbatical

Create time and space for personal, spiritual, and theological renewal. Take advantage of far-ranging courses taught by distinguished faculty and the natural resources of the beautiful Bay Area with a semester or year-long sabbatical. Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley. (800) 824-0122.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WHAT GOES AROUND...

Francis E. Moore

In my Random House computer dictionary, there are ninety-one definitions of the word TURN. The closest to my story is No. 70, "a single revolution, as of a wheel." As you read further, you may find that definition No. 85 is closer to the truth: "an attack of illness or the like."

The "turn" I am referring to is the device in cloistered monasteries and convents that shields the visitor from the monk or nun, but permits one to pass notes or small objects in and out. I'm sure that there is a fine Latin name for the device, but I will call it the *turn*.

As more and more changes come about in the church, I, for one, hope that we retain the *turn*. There are some things that we should not change. For years I have pushed for changing the liturgy to make it more meaningful to the congregation. I welcomed the use of English in the Mass. I reveled in the use of guitars. I bought into the demise of confession in those little dark boxes. I like some, but not all, of the Protestant hymns we started singing. I had a little trouble with "modern dance" in the aisles, but generally I am impressed with the improvements. But I insist that we hold the line on changing the *turn*. I hope the following stories reveal why.

Some stories about the *turn* are worth only a chuckle. Not too far from our home in Massachusetts is a Cistercian monastery that specializes in preserves and Christmas cards. One year my wife went there for some cards. She viewed the selection in the lobby, rang the bell, and asked for a hundred cards. She heard an "Oh," then heard much shuffling behind the barrier. Shortly thereafter the *turn* rotated, and box after box of cards came tumbling out. It seems that the nun thought my wife wanted a hundred boxes of cards. Eventually my wife returned all but ten boxes, the hundred cards that she wanted. If cloistered nuns are allowed to chuckle, I'll bet that story went the rounds.

Other stories have a more sinister turn: My friends, who for this story will be called John and Helen, live in the Boston area directly across the street from a convent of cloistered nuns. The solid brick wall of the convent is high and studded with shards of glass to discourage unwanted visitors. The grounds are further protected with a fierce dog who barks threateningly even at someone with the nerve to pass by on the same side of the street. It seems that John XXIII's *aggiornamento* is truly dead here.

One fine summer day, my friend John and two of his boys were fixing the porch roof of their house that faces the convent. While they were working, their cat, Murray, leapt onto the convent wall for a stroll. Immediately the dog awoke from a doze, barked, and charged the wall. John says that the attack was so fierce that, for a moment, he thought the dog would scale the wall, the street, and even the porch roof.

Murray, who John thought was a little developmentally handicapped, but whom Helen loved, instead of leaping safely to the street, jumped into the convent yard in an attempt to escape. Wrong move! Instantly there broke out cat squeals, more barking, and general pandemonium.

Helen heard the commotion and ran across the street where she confronted the turn and rang the bell.

The following conversation took place:

A voice said, "God be with you. May I help you?"

Helen said, "God be with you, too, Sister. I think that your dog is killing my cat."

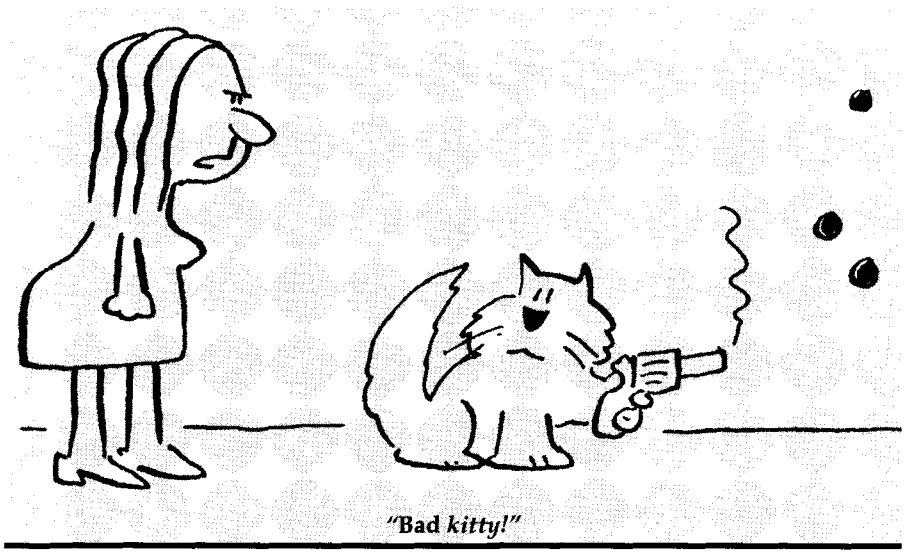
The voice said, "Yes, I believe that is true. Please wait a moment."

Then, after about four minutes, the *turn* rotated and delivered a shoe box to Helen.

In the shoebox was the dead cat.

It had suffered a *turn*, "an attack of illness or the like."

Back to my main point. Please rise in revolt if the Vatican tries to do away with the *turn*. Stories like this need to continue to be told. □



"Bad *kitty!*"

Francis E. "Gene" Moore, the father of eight, is a retired chemical engineer from Attleboro, Massachusetts.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE SPIRIT OF AMERICA IS IN OUR INTEGRITY AND INGENUITY. IMAGINATIVE WAYS TO MAKE YOUR JOB SIMPLER, FLOW SMOOTHER. THE SPIRIT OF AMERICA IS "HOTLINE," MUTUAL OF AMERICA'S DEDICATED COMPUTER NETWORK. ACCESS OUR

OUR INGENUITY

PENSION RETIREMENT DATA BASE–AND YOUR RECORDS–RIGHT FROM YOUR OFFICE. ENROLL EMPLOYEES, ADD OR DELETE DATA, AT YOUR CONVENIENCE. THE SPIRIT OF AMERICA IS OUR PEOPLE AND OUR PLEDGE: PENSION AND RETIREMENT PROGRAMS BASED ON SOUND GROWTH, NOT UNDUE RISK. THE SPIRIT OF AMERICA.

MUTUAL OF AMERICA

THE NEXT 50 YEARS

320 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED